Qatari emir visits King

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Wednesday received at his residence in Rochester Qatari Emir Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifah Al Thani and assured him on his good health. Sheikh Hamad also congratulated the King on the 46th anniversary of his accession to the Throne. The two leaders discussed bilateral relations and issues of common concern. Also on Tuesday, King Hussein received a phone call from Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak who inquired about the King's health. King Hussein and President Mubarak also discussed several issues of common concern. The King received cables from King Hassan II of Morocco, Sheikh Khalifeh Ben Salman Al Khalifeh of Bahrain and Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu at which they congratulated the King on the 46th anniversary of his accession to the Throne.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation

جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الرأي»

Two Israeli soldiers wounded in Lebanon attack

SIDON (AP) — Hizbollah attacked an Israeli patrol in southern Lebanon, wounding two soldiers, security officials said Wednesday. They said Israeli troops came under rocket and mortar shell fire late Tuesday night when they were on patrol duty at the Sojod outpost in an Israeli-occupied border enclave in south Lebanon. The wounded were airlifted by a helicopter to Israel for treatment, the Lebanese officials said, speaking on customary condition of anonymity. The Israeli army confirmed that two soldiers were "lightly wounded" in the attack, which was claimed by Hizbollah group. Sojod, 22 kilometers southeast of the port city of Sidon, is in Iqlim Al Tuffah, a Hizbollah stronghold that faces the occupied zone.

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During Mulki-Sharansky meeting:

Israel agrees to reduce its QIZ input to 8%

By Ghalia Alul
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Israel agreed on Wednesday to reduce its input in products manufactured at Irbid's Qualifying Industrial Zone (QIZ) to *eight per cent down* from 11.7 per cent for one year, according to Israeli Embassy spokesman, Roy Gilad.

"Israel agreed to [temporarily] reduce its contribution at the QIZ to eight per cent provided the Americans agree," he said.

The decision was made during a meeting between Minister of Trade, Industry and Supply Hani Mulki and his Israeli counterpart Natan Sharansky in Tel Aviv. Later in the day, where Mulki also met Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu.

Last month investors based at the QIZ charged that the 11.7 per cent Israeli input in order for Jordanian industrialists to benefit from a duty free status in the U.S. market was too high. They said they would not apply for product qualification before Israel agrees to lower its contribution. The QIZ agreement, reached between Jordan and Israel in November last year, stipulates that Israeli and Jordanian manufacturers each contribute at least one third of the minimum 35 per cent content required under the Legislation and Proclamation for duty free treatment in the U.S. Otherwise both manufacturers are required to contribute and maintain at least 20 per cent of the total cost of production each, excluding profits.

According to Gilad, Israel has also accepted "three-quarters" of the 2314 items previously requested by Jordan to be included in the list of products exchanged between Jordan and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

Jordan has for long pushed Israel to expand the list of products exchanged with the PNA, and complained of strict Israeli measures that impeded a smooth flow of goods between the Kingdom and the self-rule areas.

Trade levels between Jordan and the PNA amounted to $48 million in 1997. In the past five months, trade between the two did not exceed $13 million, according to chamber of commerce figures.

Gilad told the Jordan Times that Tel-Aviv also agreed to "greatly" reduce customs duties on Jordanian exports of air-conditioning units, televisions and ceramics to Israel and the West Bank areas.

Both sides were also due to discuss Israel's intentions to revive plans to set up a joint $80 million bromine plant.

In May, Jordan earlier dropped negotiations with Israel's Dead Sea Bromine (DSB) Group to set up a joint bromine plant after reaching an accord with the American Albemarle Corporation on a $120 million bromine complex to be completed by the year 2001.

DSB president, Asher Grinbaum, was quoted by Reuters news agency as saying on Tuesday that Jordan's decision to build a joint bromine plant with an American company was "economically illogical."

"We will do all we can in our power, through political and business contacts, to ensure that the Jordanian bromine plant will be set up with us," he said.

Also Wednesday, Sharansky hosted a dinner during which Mulki met with Israeli businessmen.



Minister of Industry Hani Mulki shakes hands with Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu on Wednesday prior to their meeting (AFP photo)

Search for survivors of Nairobi bombing ends

NAIROBI (AP) — Rescuers at the site of the U.S. Embassy bombing in Nairobi declared the search for survivors over Wednesday, hours after retrieving the body of Rose, a Kenyan whose cries for help inspired their work.

With the end of the search — and the retrieval of Rose's body — spirits sank. "Everybody was Rose, everybody they could have pulled out alive," said Red Cross spokesman John Sparrow.

Rose Wanjiku was found at 3 a.m. when weary soldiers finally peeled back the last layers of wreckage that trapped her near an elevator, said Israeli Col. Udi Benuri, a rescue spokesman.

Five days after the explosion Friday, Benuri declared the search for survivors over at 10 a.m. local time. No one had been brought out alive since Saturday, the day after nearly simultaneous terrorist attacks in Nairobi and Dar Es Salaam, a Tanzanian port.

At least 247 died in the Nairobi bombing, including 12 Americans, and 5,436 people were injured, said Maj. Gen. George Agoi, Kenya's chief of the rescue operation.

In Tanzania, 10 Africans were killed, and more than 70 hurt.

In Nairobi, rescuers marked the end of their search with a ceremony at the ruins Wednesday afternoon.

Eight wreaths lay on a pyramid of broken concrete, which U.S. Ambassador Prudence Bushnell sprinkled with red roses. Earlier, in an interview with APTV, she said three Kenyan employees of the embassy were still missing, down from 130 the day after the bombing.

She also said the embassy was turned over to the FBI as a crime scene. "The full team of FBI investigators are here," she said.

'A number of people arrested'

The Kenyan government, meanwhile, announced the arrest of "a number of people" in connection with the U.S. embassy bombing Wednesday as rescuers declared an end to the five-day search for survivors.

A brief statement from the office of President Daniel Arap Moi said those arrested were being questioned about last Friday's attack at the Nairobi embassy, but gave no further details.

"A number of persons have been detained in relation to this incident and are providing useful leads into the circumstances surrounding the bomb blast," the statement said.The government said it was grateful many Kenyans, especially members of the public, "have provided and continue to provide useful information to the various branches of the Kenya police who are in charge of these investigations."

The arrests were announced shortly after rescuers ended their search for survivors with a moving ceremony at the site of the bomb blast.



Rescuers and officials attend the ceremony of the laying of a wreath on the site of the Nairobi U.S. embassy bombing on Wednesday. The bomb blast on Friday claimed more than 240 lives and injured nearly 5,000 (AP photo)

Saudi King Fahd has gall bladder removed

RIYADH (AFP) — Saudi King Fahd underwent a successful operation to remove his inflamed gall bladder on Wednesday and is in "excellent health," a statement from the royal palace read out on Saudi television said.

The operation, the second in 10 days, was carried out by American surgeon Ted Pappas aided by a Saudi surgical team in the King Faisal Specialist Hospital in Riyadh, the best equipped medical facility in the kingdom.

The king "underwent cholescystectomy including removal of stones through endoscopy ... thank God the operation was performed with complete success," the statement said.

The decision to carry out the operation was taken after doctors diagnosed him as suffering from "chronic [permanent] infection in the gall baldder resulting from the residual stones," the statement said.

British, German, French and U.S. specialists, conferring through a satellite link-up "assured that the king is in a good health condition but accept that the vesicula bilis [gall bladder] should be removed including the stones."

The king, who is in his late 70s, was originally hospitalised August 2 and had puss removed from his abdomen under local anaesthetic following an inflammation of the colon.

The king had already had a stone removed from the bile duct in May 1994 at the King Fahd Military Hospital in Jeddah. He was also hospitalised in November 1995 after suffering a stroke.

King Fahd, believed to have been born in 1921, has reigned for 16 years over a country which is the world's largest petroleum producer and exporter, and holds a quarter of its oil reserves.

Fahd, which means "leopard" in Arabic, is the eighth son of Abdul Aziz Ben Saud, who founded Saudi Arabia in 1932.

King Abdul Aziz had 45 known sons, 25 of whom are still alive.

Fahd rose rapidly up the ranks, becoming education minister in 1953 before taking over as interior minister.

Algerian troops kill 'Zeinedine' — press

ALGIERS (R) — Troops have shot dead a commander of Algeria's most radical Islamist group who had been sought for scores of killings, a newspaper said on Wednesday.

The pro-government daily L'Authentique said Hamou Al Eulmi was gunned down on Tuesday near a mosque in the eastern city of Constantine, 300 kilometres from Algiers.

Eulmi, known by his nom de guerre Zeinedine, was commander of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in the eastern provinces of Constantine, Skikda and Guelma.

The authorities blame the GIA for the massacres of thousands of civilians in the past two years as well as deadly attacks on government forces.

Eulmi was sentenced to death in absentia for murdering many civilians, including slashing the throats of a father and his son in front of other members of the family in eastern Algeria, said L'Authentique.

Eulmi's reported death occurred a day after security sources said that troops had shot dead 25 rebels in the province of Tlemcen, 440 kilometres west of Algiers.

They were among rebels tracked down by government forces since July 25 when they slaughtered 12 people at a village in Tlemcen, the sources said.

Algerian state-run television, highlighting the military operation, repeatedly displayed on Tuesday the bodies of the 25 gunmen lying on a green slope where smoke could still be seen rising.

Liberte newspaper said on Wednesday that troops were continuing the operation.

According to Western estimates more than 65,000 people — civilians, rebels and members of government forces — have been killed since early 1992 when Algeria plunged into violence following the cancellation of a general election in which Islamists had taken a commanding lead.

Iran asks Jordan to close Mujahedeen offices

AMMAN (J.T.) — Tehran has asked Jordan to close the Amman offices of an Iranian opposition group, parliamentary sources said Wednesday.

According to deputies attending a closed session with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Jawad Anani said his talks with Iranian officials focused on two major issues: the presence of the Mujahedeen Khalq in the Kingdom and Jordan's debts to Tehran which were accrued prior to the 1979 Islamic Revolution — estimated at $12 million.

The group, which played a role in toppling Shah Reza Pahlavi's regime but later fell out with the Islamist government, operates a media and logistics office in Amman. The left-wing Mujahedeen, placed on an American international terrorist list, has its military basis in eastern Iraq.

Surprisingly, Jordan's ties with Israel did not figure high on the agenda during Anani's three-day visit to Tehran.

Since His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan attended the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) summit held in Tehran last December — the first such high-level visit to the Islamic republic since the revolution that toppled Jordan's close ally Shah Pahlavi — bilateral ties have witnessed a boost.

Jordanian-Iranian relations had been tense due to opposing political positions on major regional issues, such as the 1980-88 Iraq-Iran war and the Arab-Israeli peace process, as well as Iran's row with the United Arab Emirates over three disputed Gulf islands.

Bilateral ties were suspended in 1980 after

(Continued on page 7)

Iraq excludes Japan, Britain from food deal

IAEA says it cannot fully probe Iraqi nuclear programme

Agencies

IRAQ EXCLUDED Japan and Britain from its oil export contracts for the second half of 1998 in an oil-for-food humanitarian programme agreed under U.N. sanctions, a report said Wednesday.

The decision at the "highest level" of the Iraqi government was apparently due to the two countries' support for the sanctions, Kyodo news agency quoted an Iraqi oil official and Japanese industry sources as saying.

The oil-rich country instead agreed more contracts with Russia, France and China which had been pressing for an early lifting of the sanctions, the news agency reported.

Saddam Zaban Al Hassan of Iraq's State Oil Marketing Corporation said last month Iraq had so far signed 48 contracts for the six months to December 3 with unidentified companies for the sale of 302 million barrels of oil.

Kyodo said the top 12 contracts were concluded with companies from the three favoured countries, plus Turkey and Algeria.

The five largest contracts, each covering 18 million barrels, were concluded with two Russian firms, two French companies and one Chinese firm, it said.

The tightly-controlled humanitarian programme aims to help the Iraqi people suffering the effects of U.N. sanctions in force since the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. It is renewed every six months.

It currently provides for Iraq to spend up to $5.2 billion of profits from oil sales on food and medicine and other humanitarian supplies.

Meanwhile, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has told the U.N. Security Council it is "impossible" to fully probe Iraq's nuclear programme due to restrictions set by Baghdad, a spokesman said Wednesday.

IAEA chief Mohammad Al Baradei has written to the Security Council saying the limits set last week significantly reduce the level of assurance obtainable that Iraq has no nuclear weapons capacity, said Hans Friedrich Meyer.

"The director general observes that Iraq's refusal to cooperate in any activity involving investigation of

(Continued on page 7)

Kingdom remains in search of definitive solutions to chronic water shortages

By Ahmad Khatib
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordanians will have to live with chronic water shortages as the government scrambles to find local and foreign financiers to fund new non-traditional sources of water supplies, officials said on Wednesday.

The routine summer water shortages, laced by increased demand from thousands of visitors including Jordanian expatriates, exploded into a political foray after citizens complained of foul-smelling water supplies in early July.

A month-long summer heat, unprecedented since 1923, further aggravated the agony of citizens scrambling for private water suppliers after contamination forced them to shun their already scant tap water allocations.

But the pollution problem highlighted people's sensitivity to water shortages in a country whose population is fast outgrowing its water resources, especially non-renewable freshwater sources.

"As officials, we have to confess that Jordan is facing a severe water deficit," Water Authority Secretary General Munther Khleifat told the Jordan Times.

"Even if the whole water network is rehabilitated by the year 2002, and water leakage from sub-pipes is stopped, we will have to look at other sources of water supplies such as desalinating sea and brackish water and pumping water from the Dissi basin," (in southern Jordan) he added.

"But in order to achieve many of these projects, we have to find sources of funding, especially from the private sector."

The water pollution crisis reached its peak on Sunday with the resignation of Water Minister Munther Haddadin who was immediately replaced by serving Energy Minister Mohammad Saleh Hourani.

Haddadin enraged many citizens by responding to the water problem with a series of contradictory statements — either blaming it on human and operational errors at the Zai Water Treatment Plant (ZWP) or claiming that contamination was non-existent.

However, a number of reports leaked to the press claiming high concentration of algae and human excrement in water sources increasing worry and prompting parliamentarians to step up calls for Haddadin's resignation.

The water situation has aroused so much attention that His Majesty King Hussein, currently undergoing chemotherapy in the United States, intervened last Tuesday and asked for the formation of an independent committee to probe the mismanagement claims.

Besides ordering a study of sources of pollution, the committee's charter also hinted at possible corruption by stressing the need to investigate "intentional neglect" and the qualifications of the water ministry's technical staff.

According to an official report, freshwater resources

(Continued on page 7)

Israel arrests two Palestinians near site of settler killing

NABLUS (AFP) — Israeli forces have arrested two Palestinian men in a West Bank village a week after two Israeli militants were slain in an adjacent Jewish settlement, local residents said Wednesday.

Thabit Nasser, 20, and Ahmed Kamel Qut, 28, were picked up by Israeli agents late Tuesday from their homes in the village of Madama, neighbours said.

A spokeswoman for the Israeli army, which controls the Madama area located just south of the Palestinian-run city of Nablus, was unable to confirm or deny the arrests.

Madama was one of five Palestinian villages put under curfew for several days last week as the Israeli army hunted for two suspects who ambushed and killed two residents of the nearby settlement of Yizhar on August 5.

The two settlers were killed with automatic weapons as they patrolled a new road which Yizhar residents built without authorisation on Palestinian land around their settlement.

Israeli security officials described the attack as a well-planned ambush possibly linked to long-standing land disputes between local Palestinians and Yizhar, one of the most aggressively nationalist of Jewish settlements on the West Bank.

Neighbours said neither Nasser, a nursing student, or Qut, a teacher, had any known links to Palestinian Islamist groups.

But Nasser was wounded by army gunfire in May during a protest demonstration against Jewish settlement activity in the area.

Madama residents have had frequent conflicts over the years with Yizhar as the settlement has expanded onto farming land used for generations by the village.

Israeli police have announced no breakthroughs in the search for the gunmen who killed the two Yizhar men.



POLICE BREAK UP DEMONSTRATION: **An Israeli policemen Wednesday confronts ultra-orthodox Jews in east Jerusalem during a demonstration against the construction of a road. Some 200 ultra-orthodox Jews said the road would desecrate Jewish graves (AFP photo)**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iranians try to enter Pakistan embassy

TEHRAN (AP) — Riot police surrounded the Pakistani embassy in Tehran on Wednesday after scores of angry protesters tried to force their way into the compound to demand the release of Iranians allegedly captured in Afghanistan. Police in full riot gear arrived at the embassy in Tehran after scuffles erupted between the Pakistani guards and protesters trying to force their way in. A glass door at the embassy entrance was smashed when an IRNA reporter who forced his way in to speak to the ambassador was pushed into it.

Boat people riot again in Cyprus

LIMASSOL (AFP) — Dozens of boat people rioted for a second straight day Wednesday fearful that the Cyprus authorities were about to deport them from the eastern Mediterranean island. Around 40 Africans came out on to the streets wielding bits of furniture from the hotel in this port city where they have been staying since they were rescued from a migrant ship found adrift off the coast six weeks ago. Fellow boat people threw plates from a hotel balcony, public radio reported. When police arrived to quell the disorder, scuffles ensued and four police sustained injuries, one of them to the head, but there was no information immediately available about their condition. Only three of those aboard the doomed vessel are considered eligible for political asylum, according to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). But the UNHCR said last week that 56 of the boat people, including seven Sudanese, should have their asylum applications examined afresh.

Tehran mayor appeals against conviction

TEHRAN (R) — Tehran's mayor, Gholam Hussein Karbaschi, has appealed against his conviction last month for corruption, the Iranian daily newspaper Tous reported on Wednesday. Karbaschi's lawyer, Bahman Keshavarz, submitted the appeal on Tuesday, two days before the legal deadline, the paper said, quoting the mayor's lawyer. The mayor, an important ally of moderate Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, was sentenced to five years in jail, banned from holding public office and given a heavy fine. He was also sentenced to 60 lashes, suspended for two years. The paper added that Karbaschi's lawyers were assured that the appeals court would be headed by impartial judges.

Iraqi opposition reports mass execution

DUBAI (AFP) — Sixty-two prisoners in Iraq were killed in a mass execution at the notorious Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad at the end of June, the London-based Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) said Wednesday. The prisoners were arrested in 1991, accused of participating in the riots that erupted after Iraq's defeat in the 1991 Gulf war, an ICP statement said. They had been transferred from the Mosul prison in the north of Iraq three months earlier where they had been kept "under extremely bad conditions" and "their health was in a very poor state." The prisoners' bodies were buried in a mass graves, the statement said. The executions follows a similar incident reported by the ICP in July, when 30 prisoners were killed. The ICP claim the executions are part of a policy initiated late last year to reduce Iraq's prison population through mass executions.

Israeli leftists to create rival to settler radio station

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Leftist members of Israel's parliament plan to launch a pirate radio to rival broadcasts from a station run by ultranationalist Jewish settlers, organisers said Wednesday.

"This will be an ideological and pedagogical tool for the left to answer Channel 7," the settler radio station, said Dedi Zucker, a member of parliament for the opposition Meretz party.

Zucker told AFP the station, Radio Gal (Wave), would begin broadcasting in a few weeks from a foreign-flagged ship anchored in international waters off Israel's coast to escape Israeli law.

Channel 7 has been broadcasting with impunity for several years from a similar ship in defiance of Israeli regulations barring pirate radios.

Zucker said Radio Gal was being launched with private funds and in cooperation with the main opposition Labour Party in light of a government decision to legalise the settler radio station.

Once Channel 7 is legalised, "it will be our turn, because everything the government gives Channel 7 they will have to give us, he said.

Saguy Porat, another Meretz activist, said Radio Gal would try to counter Channel 7's hardline support for Jewish settlement and opposition to peace accords with the Palestinians. Radio Gal "will deal with subjects linked to peace and human rights."

The radio also plans to broadcast Russian-language programmes to reach the huge community of immigrants from the former Soviet Union.

Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu, whose government is dominated by right-wing nationalist groups, announced earlier this month that authorities were beginning work on new legislation to legalise some pirate radios, notably Channel 7.

Yaron London, a well-known Israeli radio and television personality who is helping launch Radio Gal, said the decision was made "because we are fed up with extreme groups taking over the radio waves to propagate their views."

"We are tired of being goody-goody lefties," he said in a television interview.

Palestinians begin inquiry into prisoner's death

GAZA (R) — A senior intelligence official vowed on Wednesday to punish any officers found to have been involved in the death of a Palestinian whose relatives say he was tortured in detention.

Walid Mahmoud Qawasmeh, 45, who had spent 10 days in a general intelligence service jail in the West Bank town of Jericho, died on Saturday during a 50 km journey to a hospital in Nablus.

General Intelligence Service Director Amin Al Hindi said in a statement that officers suspected of involvement in the case had been handed over to the military attorney general, who is investigating the issue on orders from President Yasser Arafat.

"The death of Walid Qawasmeh has affected me badly," Hindi said in the statement that was faxed to Reuters. It was also published on the front page of the daily newspaper Al Quds.

"If it is proven to us that somebody was involved in the death of Abu Nidal [Qawasmeh], then we will not be merciful with him and he will meet the appropriate punishment. We will not protect anyone who is proven to have been involved," he said.

Qawasmeh's brother, Ibrahim, said on Monday that an autopsy he had attended showed fractures in Walid's skull had caused internal bleeding.

He said Qawasmeh, a father of eight, was detained without charge by intelligence officers on July 27.

His death, which was initially blamed on heat stroke, has brought an unprecedented official outcry and highlighted the disdain of many Palestinians for the security services.

Legislator and Arafat adviser Marwan Kanafani said on Monday that those found responsible should be severely punished.

In an open letter to Arafat on Tuesday, the Qawasmeh family accused intelligence officers of abusing their power.

Seven die in bomb attack on Algerian train

ALGIERS (AFP) — Seven passengers were killed and 11 were wounded Wednesday when a bomb went off as an Algiers-Oran train passed through Ain Torki, state radio reported.

The radio quoted security officials as blaming the bomb attack, some 100 kilometres west of Algiers, on Islamists.

The train linking Algiers and Oran has repeatedly been a target of bomb attacks in the Ain Defla region where Ain Torki is located as well as in the neighbouring regions of Medea and Chlef.

Security forces mounted a massive search operation after the 12:15 p.m. blast Wednesday in the Hammam Righa region of Ain Defla, the report said.

On August 2, 12 bus passengers were murdered in an ambush in the Saida region.

On July 25, 20 people were massacred in Saida and Khelil, near Tlemcen. Security forces said Monday they had found and killed 25 members of the armed group responsible for the Khelil deaths.

Palestinian accused of planning hits on Israeli targets in Turkey

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel has arrested a Palestinian man on charges of photographing Israeli and Jewish interests in Turkey in 1995 and 1996 in preparation for alleged attacks on the sites, an army spokesman said Wednesday.

According to allegations submitted Tuesday to a closed-door military tribunal, Mohammad Ajja, 27, prepared attacks on the Israeli and Jewish targets when he was a student in Turkey.

Ajja, from the West Bank village of Dura near Hebron, was arrested by Turkish police in 1996 and expelled from the country before any attacks were carried out, army prosecutors said.

According to the army, Ajja then travelled to Yemen where he met with senior officials of the radical Islamic Jihad movement.

He was arrested by Israeli border guards trying to enter the West Bank from Jordan last month, an army spokesman said.

The military tribunal on Tuesday approved an army prosecutor's demand for a one-month extension of Ajja's remand for further investigation.

Turkish Islamists seek a 'democratic front'

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkish Islamists want to form a "democratic front" with other conservative parties including their former partner in government led by former Prime Minister Tansu Ciller, the Turkish press reported on Wednesday.

This "democratic front" will group together the pro-Islamic Virtue Party (Fazilet) of Recai Kutan, the right-wing True Path Party (DYP) of former Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ciller and three other political groups which do not have a seat in parliament.

Press reports say the aims of the "democratic front" will be to reopen the parts of secondary schools known as "imam-hatip" for the training of imams which were closed as part of education reforms in August 1997, abolish political bans on Islamist leaders and limit the powers of the constitutional court.

The parties also want to prevent the dissolution of political parties and allow the Islamic headscarf to be worn in universities — seen as a clear sign of Islamic faith, and place limits on the army's role in political life.

"It is not a question of creating a front. This move could be seen as the search for a democratic platform. What we are looking for is democracy in Turkey," said Kutan.

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel. 4773111-19
PROGRAMME TWO

Thursday Programmes

15:10 Cartoon — Animated Hero Classics
15:30 ..Cartoon — The Animal Park
16:00 ..Doc. — L'Ecole des Enfants
16:30 Doc. — Blue Water Dreaming
17:00 NBA
18:15 Sliders
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 Science Magazine — (L'oeuf De Colomb)
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 ..Comedy —Family Matters
20:00 The Great Romances
20:30 Drama — Dr. Quinn the Medicine Woman
21:10 Oprah Winfrey
22:00 News in English
22:30 Feature film — "Down Came the Black Bird"
23:59 Comedy — Can't Hurry Love?
00:30 End of T.X.

Friday Programmes

15:10 Cartoon — The Adventures of Teddy Ruxpin
15:30 The Borrowers
16:00 Feature film — "Miss Morrisons Ghosts"
18:15 French quiz show – Les Cles de Fort Boyard

19:00 Le Journal
19:15 ..French Programme — Allo La Terre
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 ...Comedy — The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air
20:00 Life on the Digital Edge
20:30 The Story of Television
21:10 Babylon-5
22:00 News in English
22:30 Big Sky

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

23:59 End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:28 Fajr
05:53.....(Sunrise) Duha
12:40.....Dhuhr
16:20.....'Asr
19:28.....Maghreb
20:53.....'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifieh. Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4622366
Anglican Church Tel. 4624853/4624811.
St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751.
Amman International Church Tel. 865897
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932
St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440
Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138
Church of Presentation, Sweifieh Tel. 5920146
The Uniate Catholic Church Tel. 4624757
The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190
Evangelical Free Church Tel. 892679
The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052
The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
The Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Relative hot weather conditions will prevail today with winds northwesterly light to moderate. Temperatures are expected to rise steadily on Friday and Saturday becoming hot. In Aqaba, it will be hot, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Amman 20/36
Aqaba 27/42
Deserts.....18/38
Jordan Valley 25/41

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 35, Aqaba 41. Humidity readings: Amman 24 per cent, Aqaba 33 per cent.

Following are the highest temperatures expected today in the following areas:

Ajloun 29
Jerash 35
Um Qays 34
Madaba 35
Petra 37
Dead Seas 41

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Khaldoun Asfour ...5332600
Dr. Bilal Sayyid 4890280
Dr. Awni Hawamdeh.....5332350
Dr. Tawfiq Qub'ain.....4623929
Firas pharmacy 5661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy ..4637055
Nairoukh pharmacy ..4623672
Al Salam pharmacy .4636730
Yacoub pharmacy 4644345
Shmeisani pharmacy 4637660
Najib pharmacy 5347632
IRBID:
Dr. Mohammad Shar'...7100588
Al Quds pharmacy
ZARQA:
Dr. Akram Haddad ..985550
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre....4637111
Civil Defence Department ..5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 4630341
Civil Defence Emergency.....199
Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777
Fire Brigade.....4617101
Blood Bank.....4775121
Highway Police.....5343402
Traffic Police.....4896390
Public Security Dept. ...4630321
Hotel Complaints.....5605800
Price Complaints.....5661176
Water & Sewerage Complaints ...4895807
Amman Municipality Complaints 4787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 4623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs 5661101
Jordan Television 4773111
Radio Jordan 4774111
Water Authority 5680100
J. Electricity Authority .5815615
Electric Power Co.....4636381
RJ Flight Information..44-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport ..44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921199
The Islamic Abdli 5666131/7
Hussein Medical Centre Tel. 5856856
Luzmila 4630195
Khalidi Maternity.....4644281/6
Akileh Maternity.....4644241/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 4642362
Malhas, J. Amman 4636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 5607071
Shmeisani Hospital 5669131
University Hospital 5353444
Al-Munsher Hospital 5667227/9
Al-Ahli, Abdali 5664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen ...477710/3
Al-Bashir..... 4775111/26
Army, Marka 4891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 5602240/50
Amal Hospital 5674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital(09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital.....(09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital(09)900990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital(02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital(02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital(02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (4453200 where it should always be verified.
Information on other flights are supplied on phone 44 (52700) or 44 (53250).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
09:45 New Delhi (RJ)
10:00 Bombay (RJ)
10:05 Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
10:15 Sanaa (RJ)
10:20 Bahrain (RJ)
10:25 Beirut (RJ)
10:40 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
11:00 Colombo (RJ)
15:55 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:30 London (RJ)
18:45 Kuwait (RJ)
19:10 Athens (RJ)
19:20 Doha (RJ)
19:20 Bangkok, Calcutta (RJ)
19:45 Abu Dhabi, Al 'Ain (RJ)
23:55 Larnaca (RJ)

Other Flights
08:55 Dubai (EK)
11:00 Kuwait (KU)
13:00 Riyadh (SV)
14:10 Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GF)
15:10 Shariqah (AH)
15:40 Doha (QR)
18:40 Beirut (ME)
19:00 Paris (AF)
20:25 Tel Aviv (LY)
21:00 Cairo (MS)
21:10 London (BA)
23:20 Istanbul (TK)
23:35 Larnaca (CY)
00:05 Moscow (SU)
01:15 ..Amsterdam, Beirut (KL)
04:20 Tunis (TU)
05:20 Antalia (TK)

Royal Wings (RW)
(For Thursday and Friday)
10:20 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA and proceeding to Marka Airport) (RW)
18:00 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport on Thursday and Friday) (RW)
20:20 Tel Aviv (arriving at QAIA on Friday only), (RW)
22:35 Tel Aviv (arriving at QAIA on Thursday only) (RW)
23:25 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordaninn (RJ) Flights
06:45 Beirut (RJ)
11:35 Abu Dhabi, Al'Ain (RJ)
12:15 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
12:30 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
12:45 Kuwait (RJ)
13:10 Paris (RJ)
13:15..Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
13:20 Athens (RJ)
13:25.....London (RJ)
13:30 Doha (RJ)
20:35 Larnaca (RJ)
21:00 Madrid (RJ)
21:25 Jeddah (RJ)
21:25 Cairo (RJ)
22:00 ...Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
00:30 Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta (RJ)

Other Flights
06:15 Istanbul (TK)
07:50 Frankfurt (LH)
08:20 London (BA)
09:55 Dubai (EK)
09:55 Damascus, Dubai (RJ)
12:00 Kuwait (KU)
14:30 Riyadh (SV)
15:00 Abu Dhabi (GF)
16:00 ...Annabah, Algiers (AH)
16:30 Doha (QR)
20:00 Beirut (ME)
21:10 Tel Aviv (LY)
22:00 Cairo (MS)
01:30 Moscow (SU)
02:15 Amsterdam (KL)
05:20 Beirut, Tunis (TU)

Royal Wings
(For Thursday and Friday)
08:00 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
09:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport on Thursday and Friday) (RW)
20:45 Tel Aviv (from QAIA — on Thursday only) (RW)
21:30 Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW)

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...mported bot... on sale at go...

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...statement to the Jordan ... Agency, Petra, Smadi ...the ministry has signed ...ts for importing bottled ...water from Saudi Ara... and Syria following the ...resulting from the high ...al which was caused by ... the water c... Justifying ...sion, Sma... importation ...vided for ... ministry re... come the ... lem and pr... of minera... manipulatio... He adde... has reache... a local con... bottles of m... ket prices ... Consumer ...

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...Petra) — The ...Security Corporation ...paid out JD25.9 million ...first half of this year in ...lump sum payments ...pensations for occu... ...injuries to 47,000 cit... ...ed by the SSC law, ...Director General Safwan ...said Wednesday. ...ording to Toukan, insur... ...fits in the first six ... 1998 increased by ...cent over the same ...d in 1997. These expens... ...continued to keep grow... ...to the increase in the ...er of citizens, especially ...employees, eligible for ...efits, he added. ...SSC's spending on pen... ...sions in th... year increa... cent over t... year, said ... the total am... sions from ... amounted ... or 83 per ... ance expen... od. By the ... 37,442 peo... pensions, ... who becam... first six m... Toukan sai... Since the ...ment in 199... million has ...sions. In th... year, the S...

...overnment pledge...

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...What's going on

...RDAN FESTIVAL/ZARQA
...L ACTIVITIES/MAIN THEATRE
...mance by Sahab Band for Fine Art at 6:30 ...cital at 7:15 p.m.
...cal performance by Aqaba Band for Popula... ...cital (to be followed by performance ...ab for Chechen Folklore) at 8:40 p.m.
...mance by Anushka at 9:00 p.m.
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... Lawa and the Beast" at 6:00 p.m. ...cital at 7:10 p.m.
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...mance by Al Marigha band (to be follow... ...8:30 p.m.
...ion by Usama Jabbour at 9:10 p.m.
...ner Wild" at the American Centre, Abdo... ...m.
...HIBITIONS
...l performance by Nadine Baibeisi (sopr... ...nian Sidiq (piano) at the Royal Cultural C... ...15 at 8:00 p.m.
...ion by the Arab Jordanian Ansar Party ma...
...Hussein's accession to the Throne at the Roy... ...day, Aug. 15, at 6:00 p.m.
...HIBITIONS
...ar on women's rights at the Royal Cultura... ...6:00 p.m.
...HIBITIONS
...Creative in Humanities and Environment" by t Gallery, Um Utheina, until Aug. 25 (Tel. ...exhibition on old buildings of Salt entitled "... ...and Time" at the Royal Cultural Centre, unti...



MAYOR DISTRIBUTES GIFTS: The president of the Chechen Ingush Society, Fakhreddin Daghestani, confers the society's shield upon Amman Mayor Mamdouh Abbadi on Wednesday at a ceremony honouring 120 tawjihi students. Abbadi also distributed gifts to the graduates (Petra photo)

Associations, parties to meet over National Conference's postponement

By Francesca Ciriaci
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The professional associations yesterday said they will open a dialogue with the opposition parties "soon" to explain their recent decision to postpone the much-awaited National Conference for another eight months.

"We decided to form a five-member committee and meet with [opposition] party leaders soon," said Hosni Abu Gheida, president of the 35,000-strong Jordan Engineers Association.

Together with Abu Gheida, the committee includes the presidents of the Jordan Bar Association, Hussein Mjalli, the Jordan Agricultural Engineers Association, Hassan Jaber, the veterinarians' association, Housam Ammoudi, and the Jordan Medical Association, Bassem Dajani.

Union leaders said it was not yet clear when the projected meeting would take place or whether all 13 parties involved in the National Conference would be approached.

The Kingdom's 13 syndicates decided last week to postpone the National Conference of opposition parties and civil society institutions, saying that more time and thorough discussions were needed to issue an effective platform.

Party leaders publicly played down speculation on widening differences with the associations, but privately expressed astonishment and frustration at the decision, which some politicians said will jeopardise the future of the National Conference.

"We are trying to put them [the parties] in the picture and make them understand that eight months is the minimum preparation period for such an important conference," Abu Gheida told the Jordan Times.

One-hundred and fifty representatives of civil society institutions launched the National Conference on June 13.

The conference was initially expected to issue a national reform plan at the end of July, an unofficial deadline that was later pushed to the end of September.

Opposition parties, professional associations, student unions, as well as a variety of other civil society institutions and independent personalities were widely expected to agree on a common platform, including halting normalisation with Israel, limiting privatisation and economic liberalisation, and strengthening ties with Syria and Iraq at the expense of the Kingdom's relation with the West.

But the postponement decision could trigger a dispute between the syndicates and the opposition parties, analysts have warned, further weakening an opposition that many already consider toothless.

Imported bottled water to go on sale at government outlets

AMMAN (Petra) — Ministry of Supply Secretary General Mohammad Smadi Wednesday said the ministry will provide quantities of bottled mineral water to the public soon to help cover a shortage in the water supply.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Smadi said the ministry has signed contracts for importing bottled mineral water from Saudi Arabia and Syria following the shortage resulting from the high demand, which was caused by the water contamination crisis.

Justifying the ministry's decision, Smadi said that while importation of water is not provided for under the law, the ministry resorted to it to overcome the water shortage problem and prevent the stockpiling of mineral water and price manipulation.

He added that the ministry has reached an agreement with a local company to sell 50,000 bottles of mineral water at market prices at the Civil Servants Consumer Corporation (CSCC) every day.

Smadi said government intervention took three forms: importation of mineral water, selling it at CSCC outlets and intensifying campaigns to control the situation and prevent any manipulation of prices by water tankers and retailers.

The government earlier this week announced that it would import bottled mineral water from neighbouring Arab countries and sell it as of Wednesday at the various sales outlets at the market price.

JD25.9 million spent on insurance benefits this year — official

AMMAN (Petra) — The Social Security Corporation (SSC) paid out JD25.9 million in the first half of this year in pensions, lump sum payments and compensations for occupational injuries to 47,000 citizens covered by the SSC law, SSC Director General Safwan Toukan said Wednesday.

According to Toukan, insurance expenses in the first six months of 1998 increased by 11.2 per cent over the same period in 1997. These expenses are expected to keep growing due to the increase in the number of citizens, especially retired employees, eligible for SSC benefits, he added.

The SSC's spending on pensions in the first half of this year increased by 17.7 per cent over the same period last year, said Toukan, noting that the total amount spent on pensions from January-June 1998 amounted to JD21.5 million, or 83 per cent of total insurance expenses over this period.

By the end of June 1998, 37,442 people were receiving pensions, including 3,044 who became eligible in the first six months of this year, Toukan said.

Since the SSC's establishment in 1980, a total of JD200 million has been spent on pensions. In this first half of this year, the SSC paid out lump sum packages worth a total of JD3.4 million to 4,629 citizens not wishing to receive monthly pensions, part of the total JD97 million the SSC has paid out in this manner to 210,000 citizens since 1980, he said.

As for occupational injuries, the SSC spent JD1 million on the cost of medical treatment for 4,000 workers injured on the job during the first half of the year. A total of JD17 million has been spent since 1980 on 131,000 injured workers.

Toukan appealed to the various institutions, firms and businesses to take further measures toward ensuring workplace safety.

Government pledges action against 'negligent' persons

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government, in a response to Lower House deputies' anger over its handling of the recent water pollution crisis, told legislators on Wednesday it would prosecute "any person" found guilty of negligence.

Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali also told the House that imported bottled water, brought in to meet market demand, will arrive today.

Several issues were discussed during the closed-door meeting, but many deputies, disappointed by the outcome of the session, said the government offered nothing new.

Meanwhile, a petition signed by 17 deputies calling for the government's resignation seems to have been put on hold.

Although they cannot hold a non-confidence vote, several deputies have recalled the resignation of the government of former Prime Minister Taher Masri in 1991 after over 50 deputies signed a petition calling for its dismissal while Parliament was in recess.

From its introduction of the 1997 elections law, which contributed to the boycott of the Islamic Action Front, the country's largest opposition party, and other parties of last year's parliamentary elections, through to the current water crisis, Majali's Cabinet has received harsh criticism from the public.

A member of the government, former Water Minister Munther Haddadin, has already resigned over the controversy surrounding the contaminated water crisis.

The deepening economic crisis, the stalled peace process and the "anti-democratic" press law have combined with charges of administrative nepotism and corruption to expand the scope of resentment and frustration among people.

what's going on

SHABIB FESTIVAL/ZARQA
THURSDAY ACTIVITIES/MAIN THEATRE
* Performance by Sahab Band for Fine Art at 6:30 p.m.
* Poetry recital at 7:15 p.m.
* Musical performance by Aqaba Band for Popular Art at 7:40 p.m.
* Poetry recital (to be followed by performance by the band of the Caucasus Club for Chechen Folklore) at 8:40 p.m.
* Performance by Anushka at 9:00 p.m.
FRIDAY ACTIVITIES/MAIN THEATRE
* Play " "Laiwa and the Beast" at 6:00 p.m.
* Poetry recital at 7:10 p.m.
* Recital of popular poetry by Abu Hisham Jalnawi and his group at 7:30 p.m.
* Performance by Al Marigha band (to be followed by a concert by Salwa) at 8:30 p.m.
* Concert by Usama Jabbour at 9:10 p.m.

FILM
* "The River Wild" at the American Centre, Abdoun, on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.

CONCERTS
* Musical performance by Nadine Balbeisi (soprano), and Mohammad Othman Sidiq (piano) at the Royal Cultural Centre on Saturday Aug. 15 at 8:00 p.m.
* Concert by the Arab Jordanian Ansar Party marking His Majesty King Hussein's accession to the Throne at the Royal Cultural Centre on Saturday Aug. 15, at 6:00 p.m.

SEMINAR
* Seminar on women's rights at the Royal Cultural Centre on Thursday at 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS
* "Miniatures in Humanities and Environment" by Walid Nasrallah at Orfali Art Gallery, Um Utheina, until Aug. 25 (Tel. 5526932).
* Photo exhibition on old buildings of Salt entitled "Engravings on the Wings of Time" at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Aug. 13.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Prince Abdullah visits ministry

AMMAN (Petra) — HRH Prince Abdullah Wednesday visited the Ministry of Interior, where he discussed issues of concern to the ministry with senior officials. Minister of Interior Nathir Rashid briefed Prince Abdullah on the duties and activities of the ministry.

Jordan signs anti-landmine treaty

NEW YORK (Petra) — Jordan Wednesday signed the international convention banning the use, stockpiling, production and transport of anti-personnel landmines at the United Nations headquarters, bringing to 129 the number of signatory countries. Jordan's permanent representative to the U.N., Hassan Abu Ne'meh, signed the convention in the presence of the chief chamberlain, HRH Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid, and the head of the International Conventions Section at the U.N.

New university president appointed

AMMAN (Petra) — A Royal Decree was issued on Wednesday appointing Anwar Battikhi as president of Hashmiyyeh University in the Zarqa governorate.

Stamp exhibition opens

AMMAN (Petra) — To mark the 46th anniversary of His Majesty King Hussein's accession to the Throne, Minister of Transport and Telecommunications Sami Gammo Wednesday opened an exhibition of Jordanian stamps at the Greater Amman City Hall. On show at the exhibition, which was organised by the ministry, are collections of stamps issued since 1920, in addition to old documents.

UBM IBM UBM IBM UBM

مطلوب موظفين

لدى كبرى شركات الكمبيوتر في الاردن

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United Business Machines (UBM) is the only IBM's remarketer for the full range of IBM products & services in Jordan. In addition to IBM products and services, UBM offers total Solutions, Consultancy, Education programs, Networking, Maintenance, and Professional services.
UBM provides ongoing training at IBM education centers in Europe and USA, and career progression to its employees, unrivaled by its competitors. UBM's commitments to offer the highest quality support and services to its customers, currently has the following vacancies:

1. ***UNIX Marketing System Engineers:***
Marketing oriented engineer with a sound technical background, to give technical marketing support to IBM UNIX Systems.

2. ***AS/400 Marketing System Engineers:***
Marketing oriented engineer with a sound technical background, to give technical marketing support to IBM AS/400 Systems.

3. ***IBM Networking System Engineers:***
Marketing oriented engineer with a sound technical background, to give technical marketing support to IBM Networking equipment.

4. ***IBM PC's System Engineers:***
Marketing oriented engineer with a sound technical background, to give technical marketing support to IBM PC's, Servers and LANs.

5. ***Sales Representatives:***
Young dynamic, highly motivated professional with sound technical and marketing skills, willing to work to promote UBM & IBM products.

6. ***Consultants:***
Young dynamic, hard worker, highly motivated professional with sound technical and marketing skills, willing to work to promote UBM & IBM Consultancy Services, good command of English is a must, Industry (or IT) knowledge with minimum two years experience.

Good presentation skills and the ability to market the full range of IBM services and equipment are required for the above positions.

7. ***Hardware Customers Engineers:***
Hardware customer's engineers to work on maintaining and servicing IBM's equipment, the successful candidate should be – Business orientated and experienced in preparing special offering.

8. ***Business Analyst:***
Strong analyst skill, organized, proactive and flexible, self-motivated has excellent planning & presentation skills, customer service oriented, 3-5 years experience.

9. ***DB Administrator:***
Talented individual with background in Data Base Administration, (Oracle, BD2, SQL, ...)

10. ***Analyst / Programming:***
Experience in doing high level analysis of users requirements.

11. ***Helpdesk Analyst Technical:***
Experience in handling, escalating and managing problems of large enterprise, good customer service and sounding AS/400 and UNIX operational background.

Along with an excellent salary, we offer the following benefits package:

- ***Vacation tickets single or married status.***
- ***Medical coverage.***
- ***Schooling plan.***
- ***Life / Accident insurance's.***
- ***Year-end bonus.***
- ***Car allowance.***

Good knowledge of written and spoken Arabic & English are essential. Candidates are requested to submit their C.V.'s enclosing a passport size photograph not later than 2 weeks from today to:

Personnel Manager
United Business Machines
P.O.Box 6410 Postal code 11118
Amman – Jordan.
All applications will be handled on strict top confidential

UBM IBM UBM IBM UBM

Taleban capture three more Afghan towns in march across north

KABUL (AFP) — The Taleban said Wednesday they had captured three more opposition-held towns, the latest in five days of victories which has seen the hardline militia sweep across a swathe of northern Afghanistan.

Western aid sources confirmed that the town of Pul-i-Khumri fell into the hands of the Taleban around 10:30 a.m. local time (0600 GMT) after a heavy overnight militia assault.

As elsewhere since the Taleban captured the key northern stronghold of Mazar-i-Sharif north of Kabul Saturday, they met little resistance, the sources said.

A Taleban spokesman said the town of Nahrin, on the route from their previous positions to Pul-i-Kumri, had also been grabbed in the advance on beleaguered rival fighters meeting the same fate as the vital opposition supply base of Taloqan which fell Tuesday.

"Our forces launched massive attacks last night and this morning and captured these areas from the enemy," said Taleban spokesman Abdul Hai Mutmaen.

A Taleban spokesman told the Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press that its forces had also captured the town of Hairatan on the Afghan-Uzbek border.

"We have captured Hairatan and taken prisoner around 200 opposition troops in the town," a Taleban spokesman told the Pakistan-based private information agency.

Masood is now confined to the plains north of Kabul and his native Panjshir valley stronghold, from where he earned fame as an anti-Soviet mujahedin fighter during the 1980s.

The ethnic-Tajik commander now has just one overland supply route left, only passable by foot and donkey. He also has no airbase on Afghan soil still under his control.

With supply lines cut and northern Afghanistan falling fast into the Taleban hands, opposition officials vowed to "take to the hills" in a fresh phase of the civil war.

"We have been in a worse position before when the Russians were here, but we beat them," asserted top ousted government spokesman Abdullah, a close Masood aide.

"The war is by no means over. It is at a turning point and a new phase of development of the conflict," he said.

In Pakistan a private Afghan information service, quoting Taleban sources, said at least 14 opposition troops were killed in the fighting and 30 taken prisoner by the Islamic militia in Pul-i-Khumri.

The sources gave no Taleban casualties, the Afghan Islamic Press said, adding a local commander Mohammad Bashir Baghlani and his men aided the Taleban takeover of the town.

Speaking in a satellite telephone interview with AFP, Abdullah said although resistance to the Taleban was now localised to several isolated valleys in mountainous areas, the conflict was in danger of regionalising.

"By supporting the Taleban, Pakistan is playing a dangerous game provoking Central Asia, Iran and Russia," he warned.

"It is our job to fight the Taleban, but these neighbours are not happy about having these fundamentalists at their borders."

Amid the Taleban's march across the north, the neighbouring nervous former Soviet states have stepped up border security. The capture of Taloqan brought the fighting to within about 50 kilometres of Afghanistan's border with Tajikistan and 175 kilometres from its border with Uzbekistan.

As well as Masood the anti-Taleban alliance includes ex-Communist and ethnic Uzbek General Abdul Rashid Dostam, the ousted Kabul government of president Burhannudin Rabbani, the Hezb-i-Wahdat, and several other splinter groups.

Meanwhile, the United Nations and the Taleban Wednesday signed a deal that could secure the return of foreign aid groups to the capital, who left ahead of a deadline to relocate to a draughty, dilapidated polytechnic building.

U.N. and Taleban officials said foreign non-governmental organisations (NGOs) could resume their activities here, but would have to accept eventual forced relocation of offices and a Taleban facility to veto unwanted projects.

Large areas of Kabul have already felt the impact of the pull-out, with tens of thousands of residents without running water and medical facilities facing shortages.



President Clinton's confidant and long time friend, Harry Thomason pushes his way through the media as leaves the U.S. Courthouse after appearing before the grand jury investigating the White House sex scandal. Thomason testified for about 90 minutes, but had no comment upon his departure. At right is his lawyer Amy Sabrin (Reuters photo)

'Starr report on Clinton will focus on Lewinsky'

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Independent counsel Kenneth Starr's long-awaited report to Congress could be only weeks away and will likely focus only on President Bill Clinton's relationship with Monica Lewinsky, The Washington Post said Wednesday.

Starr is under increasing pressure from politicians and the public to wrap up his drawn-out investigation into potential wrong-doing by the president, which has dealt with both the Whitewater real estate deal and a sex-and-perjury scandal.

The independent counsel could present his report within weeks of Clinton's testimony Monday to Starr's grand jury, sources familiar with the investigation told the daily.

The report will likely be limited to evidence of possible impeachable acts by Clinton stemming from his relationship with former White House intern Lewinsky.

Starr has been investigating whether Clinton lied about an affair with Lewinsky in sworn testimony in the recently dismissed Paula Jones sexual harassment lawsuit against him. He is also investigating whether Clinton urged Lewinsky to lie under oath — she testified in the Paula Jones case — about their sexual relationship, which would be an impeachable offence if proven true.

The sources said Starr's report will be a presentation of evidence about Clinton's conduct in the Jones lawsuit.

Once the report lands in the House of Representatives, Republican lawmakers, who control the House, will have to decide whether the evidence presented merits an impeachment inquiry.

Lawmakers from both parties are also elaborating new House rules to maintain the secrecy of the grand jury evidence until the Judiciary Committee ends its review — an undertaking many believed is doomed to failure.

Starr's report is not expected to include matters related with his four-year investigation into the Whitewater real estate deal in Arkansas that also involved the Clintons, the sources said.

The report could "lay out evidence against the president and the procedures used to gather it, along with voluminous supporting material such as grand jury transcripts, physical and documentary evidence," the daily said.

It will also include the secret tape recordings made by Linda Tripp of her conversations with Lewinsky, in which the young intern apparently talks of her sexual relationship with Clinton and which triggered the current scandal at the beginning of the year.

It is not expected to contain conclusions or recommendations to legislators, the daily said.

Lewinsky testified last week before Starr's grand jury after striking an immunity deal with the independent counsel.

The daily said White House officials and Democratic lawmakers believe a Starr report concentrating only on the Lewinsky probe would be good news, since the public appears to have passed judgement about the matter.

"If it's focused on the president's private life, it's perilous for the Republicans and less so for the Democrats," an unnamed White House official told the newspaper.

Myanmar tensions soar as Suu Kyi tries to leave Yangon again

BANGKOK (AFP) — Political tensions soared in Myanmar Wednesday as opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi tried to leave the capital to visit provincial supporters, while 18 foreign activists spent a fourth day in detention for allegedly seeking to incite unrest, diplomats said.

The Nobel peace laureate was blocked by officials some 25 kilometres outside Yangon as she tried to make her way to the town of Bessein, some 125 kilometres to the west, they said.

It was almost exactly the same position where she was stopped on a similar trip nearly three weeks ago, they added.

"The latest information we have is that she is in roughly the same place as last time," said one Western diplomat, referring to the six-day stand-off which began when officials blocked the National League for Democracy leader last time.

"But this time she is in a bigger vehicle — she is in a mini-bus."

In the last incident, the National League for Democracy (NLD) leader spent six days in her sedan on the side of a rural highway after being blocked from travelling to Bessein before being forcibly driven back to Yangon.

That was her third failed attempt in three weeks to leave Yangon and she later pledged to again attempt to meet with supporters in the provinces.

There was no immediate comment from either the junta or opposition on her latest bid to leave the capital.

A government security team, ostensibly deployed to guard Aung San Suu Kyi at her request, was withdrawn last week when she demanded they leave her compound. Sources close to the incident said she believed they had tipped off authorities each time she tried to leave Yangon.

The United States, meanwhile, demanded Myanmar's junta immediately release six Americans detained in Yangon along with 12 other foreigners for allegedly inciting unrest, a U.S. embassy spokesman there said.

"We are now asking for prompt resolution and release of those detained," the spokesman told AFP by telephone.

The U.S. activists were amongst a group of 18 rounded up Sunday while handing out pamphlets in Yangon urging people to remember the 10th anniversary of a bloody military crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrators on August 8, 1988.

The pamphlets also promoted human rights and democracy.

"We regard the passing out of leaflets as a normal and natural activity and freedom of expression in our country," they added. "These were simply benign statements."

"We hope for their release and that's what we are urging."

The detainees are six U.S. nationals, three Thais, three Malaysians, three Indonesians, two Filipinos and one Australian, the junta said. Ten are male and eight female.

Diplomats visited the 18 Tuesday and embassy sources said several of the foreign missions had requested access to their nationals again Wednesday.

The foreign activists Wednesday spent their fourth day in detention, with all in high spirits but uncertainty surrounding their fate, diplomats said.

Lengthy items on state television showed some of the detainees eating and drinking together but gave no indication what action authorities planned to take against them.

The television broadcast also showed mug-shots of the detainees and some pairs of shoes with the soles slit open, apparently showing how the business-card-sized leaflets were smuggled into the country.

"We've no idea what is going to happen to them," said one foreign diplomat whose nationals were among those detained.

Diplomats said junta officials told them they had yet to decide how to deal with the detainees and authorities were examining legal options.

But a defence ministry source said Myanmar's military leaders were committed to following established legal process and bringing the 18 before the courts.

In Bangkok, a streetside protest against the junta by some 100 exiled students from Myanmar along with Thai supporters entered its eighth day following an overnight bottle-throwing attack by six men on motorcycles which left five activists slightly injured.

The protesters believed either junta agents or Thai police were behind the attack. Police have repeatedly asked them to disperse from the vigil site outside Yangon's embassy.

Exiled pro-democracy groups have called for a mass campaign of civil disobedience in Myanmar and warned of confrontation if the junta does not convene parliament by August 21, a deadline set by the leading National League for Democracy (NLD) opposition party.

The NLD, led by Nobel prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, won 1990 elections by a landslide but the junta has refused to relinquish power.

'Cambodia faces worst Dengue outbreak in its history'

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — The International Red Cross warned Wednesday that Cambodia is facing the worst epidemic of Dengue fever in its history with more than 16,000 cases possible by the end of the year.

"It would be the worst outbreak since the first major appearance of the disease in 1981," the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (ICRC) said in a statement from its regional office in Malaysia.

As of the beginning of the month, more than 7,500 cases of Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever had been reported and at least 144 children had died of the mosquito-borne disease, according to health officials in Cambodia.

The death figure includes only children who died in hospitals and officials said they feared total fatalities might be much higher given the poor access to health facilities in Cambodia.

The ICRC said it had launched an urgent appeal Wednesday in Geneva seeking $330,000 to provide immediate treatment for children who are most at risk from the disease and to support a major awareness campaign.

The federation said it hoped to raise enough money to purchase and airlift to Cambodia more than 25,000 units of intravenous fluids and other medical items.

In addition it would supply blood transfusion kits to already overcrowded hospitals in six of the hardest hit Cambodian provinces.

This year's Dengue fever caseload appears almost certain to overtake the previous record set in 1995 when more than 10,000 children were diagnosed with the disease, the ICRC said.

"This will happen if the current outbreak follows the usual seasonal pattern, where most cases occur during the rainy season," it said. Cambodia's annual monsoon season is nearing its high point.

This year's epidemic is being blamed partially on an unusually warm winter that may have been exacerbated by the El Nino weather phenomenon.

Local health officials, in concert with the World Health Organisation have already begun a massive effort to kill the Tiger mosquito that spreads the disease, bringing in about 75 tonnes of insecticide.

There is no vaccine for Dengue fever and no specific drug to treat the disease, only the symptoms which include fever, shock and intestinal bleeding in severe cases.

'Green tea helps reduce cholesterol'

HONG KONG (AFP) — A nice cup of tea, the Chinese and Japanese variety, can help reduce cholesterol levels and help you reduce the risk of heart attack, according to the results of research here.

While tests have so far been restricted to hamsters, Professor Cehn Zhen-Yu of the Chinese University here, suggests Western humans should also get into the green tea habit.

"The message is: we (the Chinese and Japanese) have enjoyed drinking the tea for a long time. I think this would be a good practice (for Westerners) especially after meals. This really helps reduce your blood cholesterol, with less lipids in the bloodstream."

The Englishman's beloved tea-bag will not do the trick, Chen warned.

"Black tea is often manufactured, with the fermentation process partially destroying the polyphenols, although it may give the tea a more aromatic flavour.

The polyphenols are the active elements which do the cholesterol-busting. In the hamster tests, the hypopolipidemic (fat-reducing) effect of the green tea was some 15-20 per cent, Chen said.

The research was prompted by the simple idea that green tea "is good stuff."

However, Chen stressed that drinking different teas was not the only dietary distinction which gave westerners higher coronary rates.

The Western culture is so different, especially the eating habits. Western people have high-fat meals, Eastern people have low-fat meals. Also we eat more vegetables."

Preparations are ongoing with a local hospital to conduct human trials for green tea, but Professor Chen's advice is start drinking it if you aren't already, especially after meals.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Greece to use 'moral persuasion' on insult to Filipinos

MANILA (AFP) — The Greek government has assured the Philippines it will use "moral persuasion" to convince the author of a Greek dictionary to change an insulting definition for Filipino women, the foreign office said here Wednesday. The Greek ministry of foreign affairs also expressed "its regrets and sympathies" to the Philippines following the filing of a diplomatic protest over the dictionary authored by a certain George Babionitis. The dictionary defined "Filipineza" as referring both to women from the Philippines and to domestic helpers. The definition sparked fierce criticism in this country which is sensitive about the millions of Filipino women, including college graduates who work as maids in developed countries where they can earn much more than they would get here. "Although the freedom of expression is fully exercised by every individual in Greece, the Greek government assured the Philippine government that it will exercise its moral persuasion to correct the definition," the foreign office statement said. Philippine President Joseph Estrada had joined the groups attacking the Greek dictionary, saying in a statement that "Mr. Babionitis' definition is totally unacceptable and not based on fact."

29 killed in auto accident in Indonesia

JAKARTA (AP) — Twenty-nine workers were killed when they fell from the back of a fast-moving truck that swerved suddenly, a news report said Wednesday. The newspaper Kompas said they were run over by another vehicle seconds after they fell to the road. It said 17 others were injured in the accident Monday on a highway about 39 kilometres north of Lubuklinggau on Sumatra Island. The paper said all 46 passengers were thrown out when the truck swerved suddenly while overtaking. All of the victims were workers from a nearby palm plantation. Twenty-two of the dead were women. The region is about 540 kilometres northwest of Jakarta.

Malaysia arrests two over riot rumours on Net

KUALA LUMPUR (R) — Malaysia has used its powerful Internal Security Act to arrest two people on suspicion of spreading rumours of riots in the capital over the Internet last week, the official Bernama news agency said. It quoted Malaysia's police chief, Inspector-General Abdul Rahim Noor, as saying late Tuesday that a man and a woman, both in their early 20s, were detained to help police in their investigations of the rumours that shook Kuala Lumpur last week. Abdul Rahim said police could detain the suspects for up to 60 days initially. The act gives police powers to detain a person for up to two years without trial. "... we are confident of netting more people and determining the source of the rumours because the 60-day detention period is a long time," Abdul Rahim was quoted as saying by Bernama. The rumours that Indonesian labourers and locals had clashed in a central area Friday sent alarm bells ringing through the nation, forcing the police and the government to issue a denial through the media. The rumours caused a sharp weakening of Malaysia's ringgit in overseas trade Friday. The government was infuriated by the rumours and said it would not regard them as a prank but as a threat to national security. "We have to take the sternest action" against perpetrators of the rumours, Deputy Home Minister Tajol Rosli said Monday. Abdul Rahim said police had tracked the suspects by studying, reviewing and investigating electronic mail messages with the cooperation of information technology experts.

Abiola died of natural causes —international autopsy

TORONTO (AP) — After a month of detailed tests, an international medical team said Wednesday that Nigerian opposition leader Moshoud Abiola died of natural causes, but suggested further review of the health care he received in prison. James Young, Ontario's chief coroner and a leader of the five-member team, told a news conference in Ottawa that the 60-year-old businessman-politician suffered from a narrowing of the arteries and had an enlarged heart. Abiola, Nigeria's most prominent political prisoner, died July 7 while meeting a group of U.S. officials who were visiting him in custody. Young said a medical investigation, conducted by doctors from Britain, Canada and the United States, found no traces of poisons or toxins.

Chinese kills wife after operating on her like a sow

BEIJING (AFP) — A Chinese pig castrator, traumatised over not having any children, killed his wife after trying to reverse her sterility by operating on her as if she were a sow, said a report received here Wednesday. Zhao Shuixiang was arrested after the tragedy in Lankao, an impoverished region in the central province of Henan, the daily Yangcheng Wanbao said in its Tuesday edition. The man, who was experienced in the sterilisation of boars and sows, believed he could use the same skills on his wife to remedy her sterility, whose fallopian tubes were tied after giving birth in her first marriage. Most Chinese are not permitted to have more than one child under China's strict population control policy and men and women are encouraged by authorities to undergo sterilisation after birth. Zhao, believing the sex organs of a woman were the same as those of a sow, convinced his wife to undergo the operation, using the same, unsterilised, instruments he used on pigs. After administering an anaesthetic, he tied her arms and legs to four posts hammered into the ground, the same procedure he used on the livestock, before opening her lower abdomen. Taking out the uterus, into which he was to introduce his sperm, the improvised surgery revealed the fundamental difference between porcine and human anatomy, so he decided to stop the operation. He returned the uterus to its place and sewed up her stomach using the same procedure he used on the pigs. The wound became infected within days and the woman died, having not been taken to hospital, the husband unaware of the gravity of what he had done, the newspaper said. The man, who was particularly ugly, was 35 years old when he married, and had only been able to wed a woman who was divorced and sterile.



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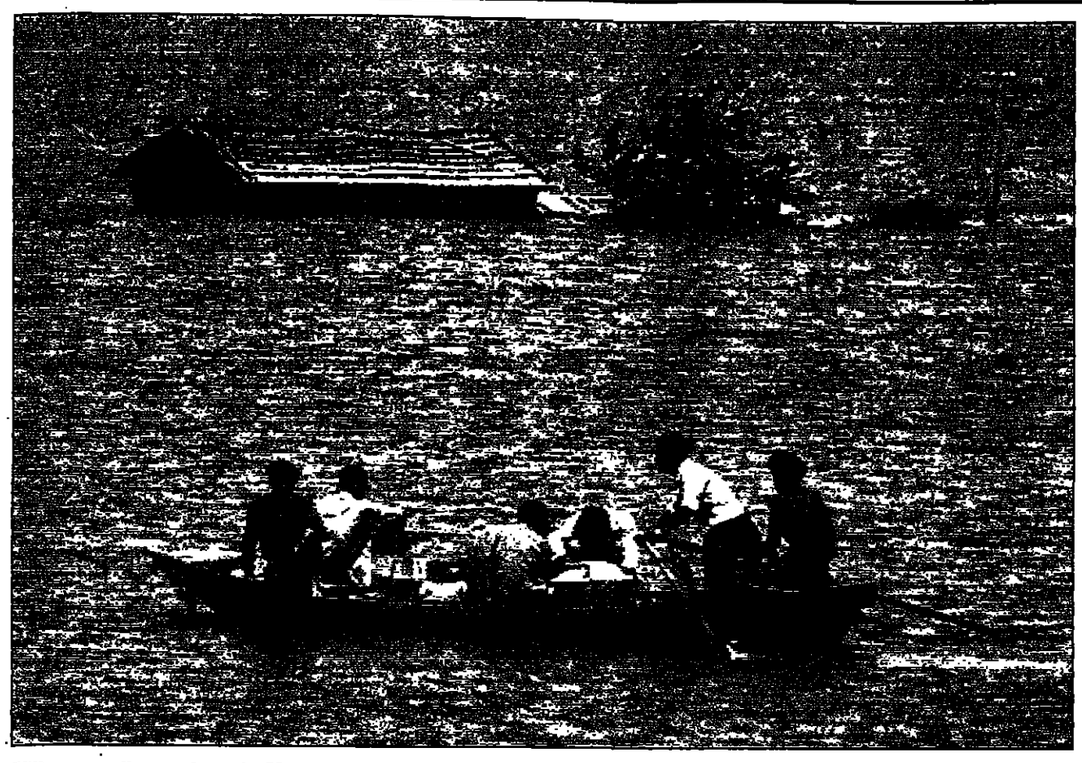
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Villagers sail on a boat in Yongxiu county in Jiangxi province, as the only means of getting around since flood waters engulfed villages in the area. Torrential rains have lashed central and eastern China for weeks and pushed rivers and lakes to their highest levels since 1954, triggering devastating floods. About 240 million people, or one-fifth of China's population have been affected (Reuters photo)

Dozens killed, 49,000 homes destroyed as China's flooding spreads

BEIJING (AFP) — China's flooding disaster has spread to the northeast and southwest, where torrential rains and dyke bursts have killed dozens and destroyed some 49,000 homes, the state media reported Wednesday.

Downpours in southwestern China's Sichuan province have killed at least 34 people and injured more than 385 since the start of the month, the Xinhua news agency said.

Pounding rains in dozens of counties across the province also destroyed nearly 10,000 houses and flooded 23,000 hectares of farmland.

Sixty-nine of those reported hurt suffered serious injuries, and two people remained missing, the report said.

In addition to flooding rivers and causing mountain torrents, the rains set off mudslides. In Gulin county at the weekend, a total of 2,200 people were left homeless, Xinhua said.

Flash floods in the neighbouring municipality of Chongqing last week killed 90 people and left 39 missing, the semi-official China News Service reported on Tuesday.

Local officials in the affected county of Fengdu confirmed the deadly torrents but cited slightly lower tolls.

A railroad between Chongqing and Guiyang city reopened Tuesday after having been shut down for five days by landslides, Xinhua said.

China's flood crisis has also spread to the northeast, where heavy rains have caused long-swollen rivers to burst through dykes, trapping thousands of people, the agency reported separately.

Some 2,300 people suddenly found themselves cut off by floodwaters when a dyke gave way on the Nenjiang river in Inner Mongolia Tuesday.

The river, which has been at record heights for more than a week, tore through the dyke in Jalaid banner (county), creating a 100-metre-long gap, it said.

The same dyke collapsed along 1.8 kilometres of its length not far away, the report added.

Elsewhere in Inner Mongolia, another 15,000 people were trapped Monday when the Hulin burst its banks and dykes collapsed on the Zhuoer river, it said.

Local officials — who throughout the country have avoided revealing human losses from flooding incidents — said there were no fresh casualties.

But the China Economic Times said a total of 96 kilometres of dykes had collapsed or been submerged by flooding in Jalaid since the start of July, killing 14 and leaving 20 others missing.

Resulting floods there had caused 39,000 homes and 911 bridges or culverts to collapse, it said.

Some 67 separate dyke breaches have plagued the banner, located near the border with Heilongjiang province, it said.

Beijing last week estimated that at least 2,000 had died from floods this year, mainly in southern China and along the giant Yangtze, which has swollen to its most deadly levels since 1954.

Northeastern China has had several days of torrential rain, and state television showed a critical situation in Heilongjiang province, where a railway line was cut and soldiers toiled to contain leaks from the Yihe reservoir, which holds 70 million tonnes of water.

Number-two Communist Party leader Li Peng called on local populations along the Nenjiang to strengthen dykes to protect the downstream metropolis of Harbin, home to some four million people.

Li, who is the chairman of China's parliament, also urged authorities to carry out "timely" evacuations in areas threatened with flooding.

The Nenjiang is a tributary of the Songhua river, which flows through Harbin.

This year's floods have affected 240 million people or one-fifth of China's population, according to the Civil Affairs Ministry.

2 more dead, thousands evacuated as fresh rains batter South Korea

SEOUL (AFP) — Fresh rains battered central and southeastern South Korea Wednesday, leaving at least two more dead and sending thousands fleeing to higher ground, television reports said.

The latest deaths brought the toll from this month's deluges to 276, with 55 people still missing. The total cost of flood damage is estimated at between $1.48 billion and $7.4 billion.

At least 14,000 residents of the hardest hit area — Boun County, in North Chungchong Province — evacuated their homes to avoid flash floods and landslides.

Some 350 millimetres of torrential rains poured down there between late Tuesday and early Wednesday.

Fresh storm alarms were issued for central North Chungchong Province and southeastern North Kyongsang province, while Seoul and its surrounding Kyonggi Province were warned of approaching heavy rains.

A flooding alarm was issued for upper reaches of Nakdong River flowing southeast through the southeastern provinces of North and South Kyungsang.

"Rain clouds, which generated in low-pressure fronts over China, are spreading widely over the Yellow Sea and are approaching Korea from the west," a meteorologist said.

"We expect heavy rains in Seoul and the central South Korea until tomorrow," he said.

He said warm fronts from the northern Pacific were hovering over the Korean Peninsula, acting like a "pipeline" for rain clouds from the west that have brought record rainfalls during the past few weeks.

Boun was besieged by flood waters and virtually isolated from the rest of the world as road and telephone links were cut off and power supply lines were knocked out by thunderbolts.

In Uisung County in the southeastern North Kyongsang, four people were buried in mud when their house was swallowed up by a landslide.

One person was confirmed dead, another was seriously injured and the fates of two others were unknown. The other death was reported in Sangju City in the same province, where an old woman was swept away by a raging stream.

Some half a million people were mobilised in efforts to help fight the aftermath of the deluges across the country, with U.S. and South Korean troops searching for landmines and other ammunition swept away by the floods.

The U.S. military said 14 of its installations in the area suffered $130 million worth of damage in the deluge, reports said.

U.S. forces said they had recovered all their lost ammunition containers with most of their cargo intact.

Fossett sets new record crossing Atlantic

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Adventurer Steve Fossett has become the first person to cross the south Atlantic in a balloon, leaving him in good shape both emotionally and geographically.

The Solo Spirit was about 1,450 kilometres southeast of Cape Town, South Africa, late Tuesday night, moving at about 182 kilometres, as Fossett approached the 11,265 kilometre mark in his bid to become the first balloonist to circle the globe.

Fossett's mission control at Washington University in St. Louis said the balloon had picked up some favourable winds and was drifting across the Indian Ocean. The next challenge was for his crew to determine the best altitude and wind pattern to carry him towards Australia. They were expected to make a decision early Wednesday.

"It's going to be a reasonably good flight through this zone," Solo Spirit meteorologist Bob Rice said. "All we're trying to do now is pick an altitude that treads through this particular minefield."

The 54-year-old Chicago businessman took off from western Argentina late Friday in his fourth attempt to float around the world. His previous attempts have been in the northern hemisphere, a far less hazardous route.

The southern route is primarily over water.

"It's OK to fly down there, but the penalty for failure is pretty stiff," Rice said. "If you have to abort or run out of fuel, it's pretty bad country to drop into."

There is usually a dense cloud cover in the higher latitudes of the hemisphere and icing could occur if the balloon had to go down through the clouds. The balloon is travelling around the 7,620-metre level. Rice said, with the temperature in the unheated gondola at freezing.

The Solo Spirit passed about 105 kilometres south of Cape Town Tuesday. Fossett's west-to-east course just skirted the extreme southern tip of the continent.

Rice said Fossett was facing no immediate problems with about 25 per cent of the trip behind him.

"He seems to be in very good spirits," Rice said.

Now that Fossett has passed Africa, Rice said he will try to catch favourable winds to carry him on to Australia before his hoped-for return to South America via the Pacific.

Rebel commander says 60,000 fighters closing in on Kinshasa

GOMA, Congo (AP) — Congolese rebels ruled out negotiations with embattled President Laurent Kabila and said they were pressing their insurgency with 60,000 fighters marching on the capital, Kinshasa.

"Our strategy is that our friends are everywhere. It's a war that concerns everyone," rebel commander Jean-Pierre Ondekane said in the eastern city of Goma Tuesday. "We want to end this soon." Meanwhile, Kabila's government boasted it was retaking territory lost earlier to the rebels and had deployed new forces to the east and west of Kinshasa.

The rebellion erupted last week when Congo, formerly Zaire, announced it was expelling Rwandan officers and soldiers who had trained and managed Kabila's new army. The Rwandans also had helped Kabila overthrow longtime dictator Mobutu Sese Seko last year.

The expulsion of the Rwandans spurred Congo's ethnic Tutsis to revolt against Kabila. The Tutsis also had joined Kabila in a fragile alliance against Mobutu.

Kabila's forces have been cracking down indiscriminately against Tutsi residents, broadcasting fierce attacks against them, arresting them, holding them in cramped cells and in some cases beating them in front of family members.

The government maintains there has been no maltreatment of Tutsis but acknowledges a roundup.

Kabila has accused Rwanda and Uganda of supplying tanks and troops to the Tutsi rebels, an accusation both countries have denied.

Kabila's relations with the two neighbours have been gradually deteriorating, particularly because of his failure to control Congo's vast eastern border region. Rwanda has been frustrated by Kabila's failure to stop cross-border Hutu rebel attacks on Rwanda.

Ondekane, the rebel commander, said rebel troops had cut an oil pipeline in western Congo that supplies Kinshasa, and that troops had reached the outskirts of the major Congo River port of Matadi, 274 kilometres southwest of the capital.

"I've taken in soldiers who had not been paid for eight months. I clothed them, I armed them, and they are heading towards Kinshasa," he said.

The reported advances came amid government claims that its forces had made inroads in both the far west and east. Officials said government troops had retaken the city of Bukavu, south of Goma, and a nearby airport while other government loyalists were fighting for the western town of Boma.

Ondekane denied that Bukavu had been recaptured.

The reports from both sides could not be independently confirmed.

In contrast to November 1996, when fighting for Goma between Mobutu's forces and the rebels was heavy and looting widespread, shops in the sprawling town Tuesday were well-stocked and banks were open.

Life under the rebel military administration appeared to be near normal. Residents said no shots had been fired, and the change of power had been peaceful.

In their villa-turned-army headquarters on the shore of Lake Kivu, rebel commanders identified themselves as former officers in the Congolese military who were fed up with what they said was Kabila's corruption, mismanagement and misuse of power.

"We don't want Mobutu III and Mobutu IV," said Ondekane, who ruled out negotiations with Kabila.

Deo Balezi, a Goma activist, said: "This is not a foreign revolution, this is a Congolese affair. We are fighting against Kabila's nepotism, corruption, tribalism and dictatorship."

NATO envoys meet over Kosovo crisis

BRUSSELS (AFP) — NATO ambassadors were meeting here Wednesday to adopt three plans for possible military intervention in the conflict-torn Serbian province of Kosovo, a diplomatic source said.

The meeting, which began at 10.30 a.m. (0830 GMT), will consider three options.

The first — an air campaign against targets in Kosovo and other parts of Yugoslavia, made up of Serbia and the much-smaller Montenegro — was adopted by NATO last week and needs no formal approval here.

The second is a peacekeeping operation on the ground in Kosovo and neighbouring Albania should the warring sides — ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and the Belgrade authorities — agree to either a ceasefire or a peace plan.

The third option is a limited air operation aimed at a particular end, such as air attacks in response to civilian massacres in a particular area.

The ambassadors are not due, at this stage, to discuss the necessity of a U.N. Security Council mandate for military intervention in Kosovo.

The meeting is chaired by Sergio Balanzino in place of NATO Secretary General Javier Solana, who is currently on leave.

Hundreds of people have died and more than 200,000 people have been displaced since the conflict began in February when Serb forces launched a crackdown on the Kosovo Liberation Army, fighting for independence for the ethnic Albanian-majority province.

Kosovo rebels put up stiff resistance to Serb forces

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia (AFP) — Kosovo rebel forces are putting up stiff resistance to Serb attempts to rout them from an area in the west of the troubled province, well informed Serbian sources said Wednesday.

Heavy fighting lasted all day Tuesday and continued overnight, the sources said, describing the resistance put up by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) separatist rebels as "very, very strong."

The sources said that the KLA had between 3,000 and 4,000 men in the village of Glodjane which lies just east of a strategic road between the towns of Decani and Djakovica in western Kosovo.

"This is the strongest resistance since the beginning of the conflict," a Serb source said.

Clashes between ethnic Albanians seeking independence and Serbian security forces broke out in late February when Belgrade sent its forces into Kosovo to root out the KLA, then a fledgling militia.

Five months later the Serbs are still battling the lightly armed KLA. In its latest efforts to destroy the separatist movement, Serbian army and police units have pushed the rebels out of many areas they controlled and put tens of thousands of civilians to flight.

No further information was available Wednesday on the situation in the area, though the Serb sources acknowledged that there had been casualties on the Serb side in the clashes.

The latest reports of fighting come hours after the U.N. Security Council called for an immediate ceasefire between Serbian forces and pro-independence ethnic Albanians in Kosovo.

The 15-member council, and U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan in a separate strongly-worded statement, criticised Belgrade Tuesday over its latest offensive against the ethnic Albanian forces in the southern Serbian province.

But as expected, amid strong resistance from permanent members China and Russia which hold veto power, the council failed to back up its call for a ceasefire and a dialogue between the parties with any threat of further measures.

Case against Clarke 'will be closed'

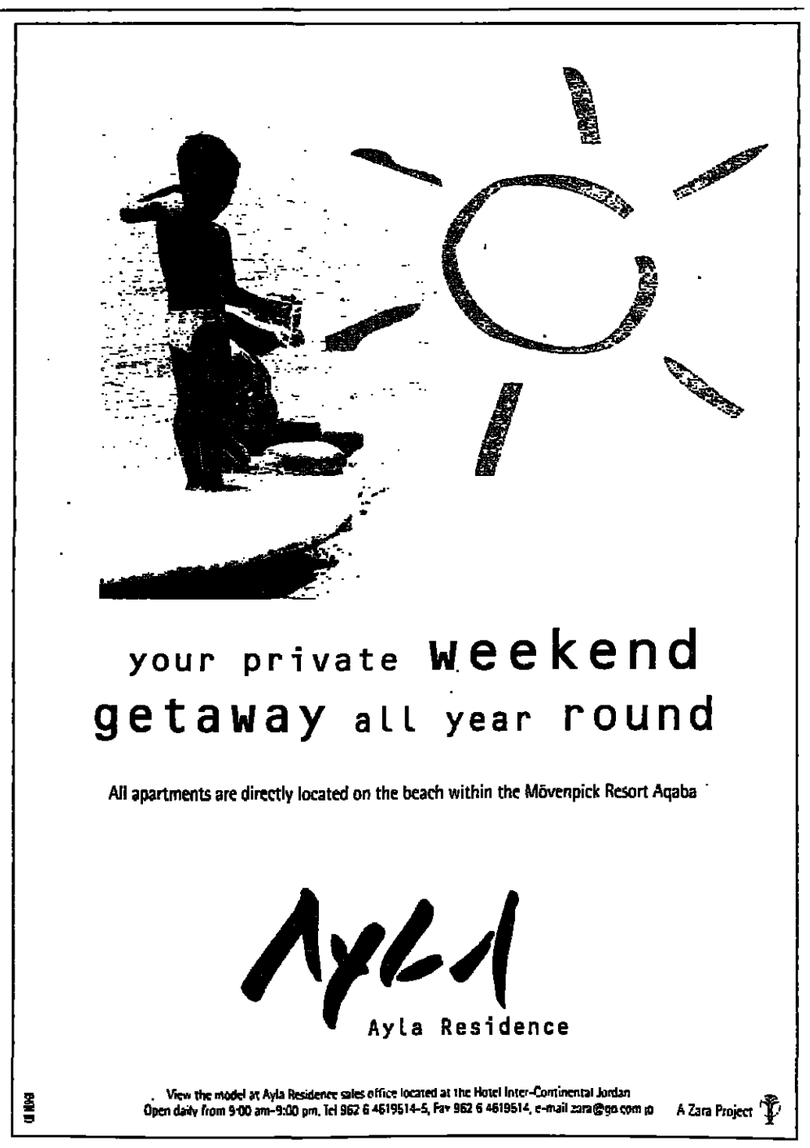
COLOMBO (AP) — The government will close its investigation against Arthur C. Clarke unless a British tabloid hands over evidence to support its allegation the science fiction writer was a paedophile, a government official said Wednesday.

Police sought the tape recording of an interview conducted by the Sunday Mirror on which it based its allegation that Clarke had sex with children, but the paper had not responded to repeated requests, said C. R. de Silva, the government additional solicitor-general.

"We have approached Interpol. Our embassy in London did its best. In short, we did everything, but the tape has not come," de Silva said.

"Our investigations in Sri Lanka have not found any evidence against him," de Silva said. "Keeping this in view, and the situation that we are unable to get the tape, we will have no option but to close the case."

Sir Arthur's office said his lawyers were discussing with government officials how to close the file. He has denied the allegations against him.



Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation established 1975
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Exercise in doublespeak

IT SEEMS that dashing Arab hopes has become a hobby of the Israeli government. For, whatever excitement we gleaned from the headline that Israel had agreed to U.N. negotiations on a nuclear weapons and materials production ban was cut short by Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu's announcement that Israel supports the talks only on the condition that an eventual treaty would not require the country to agree to international inspections of its nuclear facilities at Dimona.

Netanyahu cited "Israel's own considerations which are unique to its situation in the region." Maybe we shouldn't be surprised. Israel, in spite of its eagerness to be part of the region, has always claimed to be an exceptional and special country somehow apart from the region itself, and therefore, not subject to the rules that its enemies and allies alike play by.

An eventual treaty would most likely require all signatories to open their nuclear facilities up to international inspection to supervise the ban on production of plutonium and enriched uranium used in the manufacture of nuclear arms. At the same time, Israel, by agreeing to form a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) negotiating committee, has issued its umpteenth de facto admission of its possession of a *nuclear arsenal*.

Israel's determination, then, that a treaty not require that country in particular to open up to international inspections renders the whole routine of establishing the FMCT committee a farce. It also raises the question of what does Israel want to hide from the rest of the world. Or is the agreement to form a committee another tactic to satisfy its paymaster?

Needless to say, Israel has again lost a golden opportunity to generate regional confidence in the on-going peace process. After all, it is hard for us to imagine a comprehensive peace with a nation that points weapons of mass destruction in our direction.

Finally, we would like to remind Israel that modern thinking on the nuclear debate is that nuclear warfare is a zero-sum game. There will be no such thing as winners or losers. The "self-defence" argument is antiquated — in a nuclear war, there will be no such thing as "self-defence".

Maybe the question for Israel is not whether it wants to be part of this region, but whether it wants to be part of this century.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahed Fanek was critical in discussing the constitutionality of the present government's continued tenure. According to the writer, Minister of Water and Irrigation Munther Haddadin was forced to resign in order to ease the public pressure on the government, due to the recent water crisis. Fanek explained that the Jordanian Constitution stipulates that the King is the only person authorised to accept the resignation of the government and only while he is in the country. He said, constitutionally the Crown Prince is not authorised to sack a government or order the formation of a new government. But, by accepting Haddadin's resignation, the constitutional obstacle was bypassed, said Fanek. The writer said Haddadin was used as a scape-goat for the present government. If a minister dies while the King is abroad, asked Fanek, should his body should be mummified and put in the ministry until the King's return. He said some opponents of the Majali government prefer the situation remain as it is, so that government mistakes accumulate and these opponents have a chance to become saviours.

Al Dustour's Oreib Rintawi criticised the Parliament for passing the draft press and publications law. He said Parliament should have stood by the press and refused the unjustified law. The writer praised the Jordanian media for its role in unveiling the facts in the current water crisis. He said the press was more effective than Parliament in dealing with the crisis. Rintawi lashed out at some deputies for being subjective and hesitant in debating the press law. He said that according to some deputies' statements Jordanians were hopeful that Parliament would bring the democratic experience in the country to advanced stages, but what happened in the Lower House was exactly the opposite. Rintawi said people living under severe economic strain can not also suffer constraints on freedoms.

View from Academia

Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubeh

Mismanagement with a capital M

IF YOU were asked to name the major cause behind poor performance in most, if not all, of our public institutions, what would you say? I would say, it is mismanagement.

Take the unfortunate series of crises, mistakes and "incidents of negligence" which have received great attention recently: water contamination, the near miss between two aeroplanes over Amman, the near explosion at the Aqaba Power Station. Some would add to the list the press and publications "flaw," as they jokingly call it. Take also the many other unfortunate problems, incidents and flaws which we encounter daily, many of which have received little attention but do exist nonetheless. What do they all illustrate? Mismanagement.

I have, since I started writing this column over six years ago, most probably bored my readers to death with anecdotes and tales about incompetent administrators, poor managers, corrupt bosses, hypocritical chairpersons, shameless directors, peacock heads, and hopeless and helpless individuals in leadership positions. If I have done so, it is out of the conviction that leadership is not a joke. It is a serious, sensitive, delicate, vital, pivotal, crucial (you name it) task. A leader at any level of the administrative ladder can either facilitate, spearhead and effect change or obstruct, dismiss and kill it. Like it or not, this is the bottom line.

One cannot overemphasise the role of management (or mismanagement). While one can live with one, two, three or ten incompetent or corrupt employees (though in principle we should not tolerate even that), one cannot live with one single incompetent or corrupt administrator. The damage the latter causes is incredible. For one thing, it is he/she who sets the tone for the whole institution or department (uninspiring administrators kill inspiration, enthusiasm, devotion and commitment among all of their employees); it is he/she who sets the example (whether we like it or not, employees emulate and mirror their bosses); it is he/she who has the ultimate power to approve or disapprove. It is he/she who resents inspiring, enthusiastic, devoted, and committed employees and fights them by all means at his/her disposal. If one corrupt employee does 1 per cent damage: one corrupt administrator does 50 per cent at least.

You know what our problem in this part of the world is (among many others, that is)? We specialise, we distinguish ourselves, and we excel (pardon my ironic choice of verbs) in attracting, perhaps even detecting, mediocre, incompetent individuals and appointing them as administrators and bosses of sorts. We delegate important responsibilities to the least responsible among us. We expect success, distinction and excellence from the least successful, distinguished, and excelling among us. We say this with a grain of salt, but the truth is bitter.

Of course, there are able, competent, efficient, creative, responsible and exemplary administrators in our society. But they are a small minority, tiny islands scattered in a vast sea. The majority of our administrators (a comfortable majority I would say) fall into one or the other of these two categories: a) the mediocre, incompetent, hopeless, helpless, poor, pathetic, well-meaning but unable, cowardly and b) the selfish, corrupt, evil, conniving, aggressively subversive, cliquish, daring, bold and ugly, hypocritical, fake, ill-meaning.

Those belonging to the two categories are extremely harmful. It is they who directly or indirectly cause most of the problems from which we suffer. More than this, they are the cause of our problems and they are the forces that, if we are not careful, may bring us down sooner than later. Their presence in our midst is equal to, if not worse than, the AIDS virus that gnaws at and attacks the immune system. How can we expect a nasty virus to function as a remedy?

Some may wish to place mismanagement in a cultural context. We attribute everything to overall culture and to the process of education. Our educational institutions have not succeeded (effectively, that is) in providing us with enough efficient, able, devoted, creative, and competent individuals. Our overall culture does not foster the ideals of commitment, correctness, devotion, efficiency, etc.

Some, especially in light of the spread and popularity of the Total Quality Management (TQM) ideals, may attribute the problem to lack of guidance, training and reinforcement of positive values in administrators and employees.

Fine, I would say. Education, culture and the absence of a rigorous TQM culture all have something to do with our problems.

Let's, however, remember two things. First, our educational institutions may not provide us with 100 per cent able, competent, and efficient individuals. Granted. But I would say, on the basis of my experience and observations, that they provide us with, roughly, 20 per cent exceptional/outstanding individuals and 40 per cent very acceptable. Sixty per cent potentially able and competent individuals is not bad at all. I would also claim that 60 per cent of our citizens at least have excellent or very good work ethics, abilities, and values. I would also claim that 60 per cent have in them the values of TQM without TQM training. Why, however, we choose from the bad 40 per cent and not from the good 60 is beyond me. Our problem, in great part at least, is a selection problem.

Secondly, educational reform, social reform, and the application of TQM take time. Are we going to wait until our educational institutions change and until our culture changes? Should we remain arm-tied and bewail our lot until then?

Besides, I cannot help but feel that every time we bring the matters of education and culture into the picture that we are actually looking for excuses, that we are shifting the blame from ourselves, that we are evading confrontation of issues.

Let's not wait for long-term solutions to materialise for us to do something. Let's not wait for miracles to happen. The way I see, the problems lies in our choice (bad choice) of individuals who fill the various important administrative and leadership positions. Can't we (if we wish to; if we make it a priority) choose from the more able and fit among us? Is it so difficult to spot competence, excellence, distinction in our society? How do they do it in other societies? Let's be more careful in our selection. Leadership positions are too vital to be lavished on buddies, relatives, and members of selfish, ill-meaning cliques. We cannot count on God's mercy to protect us from the consequences of disasters every time they happen. As religion teaches us, God has mercy, but God has also wrath. Beware the wrath of God, and the wrath of man.

Our society can be turned into something categorically different, and better, overnight. It has great abilities and great potential. Its top leadership is great; the majority of its citizens (the 60 per cent above) is great. Where is the problem?

Selection is the problem; selection is the solution. Let's select honestly and carefully.

Barak spares no criticism of Netanyahu government

By George S. Hishmeh
Special to the Jordan Times

WASHINGTON — Why has Israel decided to send a rescue mission to Kenya, asked the history professor at the George Washington University on a sightseeing trip last weekend to the beautiful port city of Annapolis, a few miles from Washington?

The answer was aptly provided by the Israel paper Haaretz a day later: "The (Israeli) humanitarian mission, which is being covered extensively by all the major international networks, can generate important dividends for Israel's image worldwide."

It continued:

"For many years, the occupation in the (Palestinian) territories has shown IDF (Israel Defense Forces) soldiers to television viewers worldwide against the backdrop of demolished homes of Palestinians. The photos of Israeli soldiers working day and night to pull a Kenyan woman out of the rubble reflect the light of Israel. Reports about medical officers who came from vast distances to treat a wounded African present the right attitude toward the life of every human being."

It is indeed pathetic if Israelis — and their present leadership — believe their participation in the Kenyan rescue efforts was for the purpose of correcting a public image. Israel needs more than a public relations exercise, the proof may be in the testimony of the Israeli Labour Party leaders who descended on Washington last week to woo U.S. officialdom and the "enlightened" public in the halls of Congress and at various think-tanks and within the divided Jewish community.

The other side of the coin was less flattering for the Israel of Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu. The verbal lashing by the Labour Party team led by the would-be prime minister, Ehud Barak stunned some of his audiences which he pointed out at one reception did not include Jerry Falwell, the conservative evangelist leader who figured prominently in at least one reception for Netanyahu.

According to Barak, the present government of Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu lacks the commitment to peace that former Prime Ministers Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres had "in their hearts," and to an understanding of history.

He said he was aware of "most" of the details of the present negotiations about the second redeployment.

"I should tell you that to the best of my judgement that everything that could be achieved right now, could have been achieved a year ago or 15 months ago. I do not see any gain from dragging of our feet during the last year."

Barak said Israel has paid a price for its foot-dragging. "Israel is more isolated than ever on the international arena. The last drop of trust has been destroyed. The nuclear domino is crawling towards us from the East. We let the extremist forces, like (Palestinian Sheikh) Ahmed Yassin to become more and more influential, and the government has indirectly damaged the relationship with the United States."

'Israel is more isolated than ever on the international arena. The last drop of trust has been destroyed' — Ehud Barak

They are focusing on "individual trees and losing the sight of the forest," he said. "This is like looking at a Van Gogh painting with a drinking straw. You will not be able to tell the whole painting."

The Labour Party leader, who was unsparing in his criticism, saw more "far- reaching consequences" in Iraq's renewed conflict with U.N. inspectors, the "acceleration" of the Iranian nuclear programme, and the emergence of extremists or fundamentalists on account, as in the Palestinian case, of moderates in Palestinian society, than in the "foot-dragging" under way.

The only way to achieve "personal security for Israelis," he continued, is through a serious attempt to achieve peace with "our inner ring of neighbours" — the Palestinians, Syrians and Lebanese.

The Labour Party chief said if the present Israeli government remains hostage to the extremist groups within its ranks "we would not be able to see the achievement of a peace agreement with the Palestinians nor with the Syrians."

Barak said his party is determined not to seek the "utopian kind of security (that Netanyahu wants) but the earthly achievable security, less than perfect but (which) will ultimately lead to reconciliation."

He said the Netanyahu government "by setting this kind of utopian standard ... is creating a recipe for a self-fulfilling prophecy of failure that will materialise."

He added that if disengagement between the two communities — "eight million between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River — is not possible in the manner of Robert Frost's recommendation that 'high fences make good neighbours,' we will end up at best with a South African type of apartheid or more probably a Bosnia or Belfast. This is the challenge of leadership in the Middle East to avoid such a disaster."

The smooth-talking Barak stressed in reply to a question at a closed policy forum held at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy that he cannot see a "national unity" government with the present leadership in Israel, especially with the presence of the extremist groups within the Likud-led coalition.

Talk of a national unity government in Israel has raised many an eyebrow in Washington in the wake of an article by a prominent Israeli journalist who underlined the long-held fear in Israel of alleged Iranian nuclear designs, and the possibility of an Israeli preemptive strike against Iran as happened when Israeli warplanes attacked Iraq's nuclear facility at Osirak in 1981.

Yossi Klein Halevi, a senior writer for the Jerusalem Report, wrote in the Los Angeles Times last week that the feared Iranian threat could be the catalyst convincing Likud and Labour to join together in a national unity government.

"Should a unity government decide on a preemptive strike against Iran, it would be likely to enjoy strong backing from an otherwise war-weary Israeli public," he added. Otherwise, Netanyahu could not do it alone since he lacks "the trust of the public to order an attack against Iran that might lead to regional war."

Letters

Grateful for the reception

To the editor:

IT WAS indeed a privilege to visit your Kingdom during my recent trip.

I must say that I was most impressed with the cleanliness of your city and the progressive approach Mr. Mayor has in developing Amman.

It is our prayer, along with those of millions of others, that His Majesty King Hussein recovers fully and completely, enabling His Majesty to return to his beloved people speedily. HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, is definitely a most capable and intelligent individual having the respect of not only the citizens of Jordan, but also the international community.

A special thank you to Dr. Husam Abu-Ghazaleh and those at the Royal Court for preparing a most interesting and beneficial itinerary enabling me to visit ministries, universities, institutes and academies.

The most professional reception received is greatly appreciated.

My congratulations to the Jordan Times for your worthy publication.

Prof. Wil. C. Goodheer, Ph.D.
President
The International University-Vienna
Austria

Happy to touch base

To the editor:

I VISITED Jordan last summer and attended the university in Amman to learn Arabic. I met some very good friends and look forward to the day that I can see them again.

Jordan is a beautiful country. Many Americans have a wrong perspective of the Middle East, and it pleases me that I can change their opinions of the Arab people and their culture.

I want to thank you for putting your paper on the Internet. It pleases me to know that when I miss Jordan and the friends I made there, I can get on the Internet and read about my adopted country.

If there is any way that you can put a small "hello" for me in the paper somewhere, I would be honoured. Noor Al-Amawi, Helen Haddad, and Haya (I don't remember her last name) are the friends that I made while there. They attend the University in Amman in the Foreign Language Department and read your paper. I miss them terribly and hope that it is Allah's will that I see them soon.

Carolyn Walker
z_shoultsca@titan.sfasu.edu

'Truth to be revealed'

To the editor:

SO WHAT a minister has resigned!? We still want to drink pure water and do not want to be treated as fools.

Jordanians by now have had enough!

It is high time for the "Mismanagement and Misconduct File" to be opened and for the truth to be revealed.

Lola Ingrid
E-Mail: Jordanian2000@yahoo.com

Fed up with 'promises'

To the editor:

PRESIDENT OF the Amman Chamber of Commerce Khaldoun Abu Hassan's recent comments before the Lower House Financial and Economic Committee are true and to the point, and reflect the feelings of most industrialists in Jordan.

It is high time the government addresses the problems facing our local industries.

We are fed up with promises that are never kept — whether it is the promise of exemptions of production input from custom duties or the elimination of bureaucracy when dealing with government departments especially the Customs Department.

Abu Hassan's comments regarding the issue of migration of some Jordanian industries to neighbouring countries are also true and an indication that the investment atmosphere in Jordan is not appealing to local people let alone foreign firms.

The simple fact is that the rift between the government and the ACI is widening, and this can only cause further deterioration in the confidence of the Jordanian economy.

We as industrialists together with the ACI urge the government to put the survival of our sector which provides more than 150,000 jobs as its highest priority before it is too late.

What we need is a bold government which will introduce courageous legislation to protect and encourage this vital sector of our economy.

Marwan Nassar
Jordan Rubber Industries Co.
General Manager

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...ILL BUT MEANINGFUL:

...NETHING FOR EVERYONE

The Indomitable

By Jean-Claude Elias

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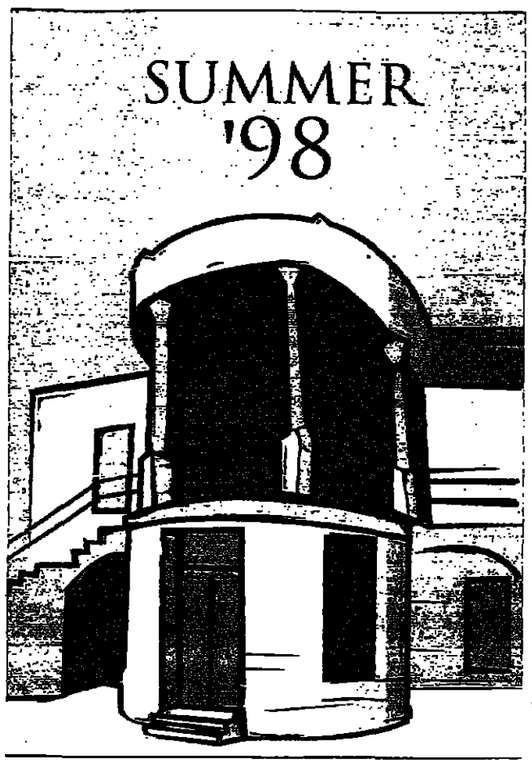
Society on the move

There are still those who care, thank goodness

TAKING UP the many calls for the encouragement of academic research, prominent businessman Ali Mango has donated JD 1 million for the establishment of a basic and applied sciences research institute. The Hamdi Mango Centre for Academic Research, named in memory of Mango's late father, will be set up at the University of Jordan where its activities are to include providing funding for research projects of faculty and graduate students, convening symposia, seminars and workshops, nourishing the university library, and disseminating the results of studies and research projects. The centre will be administered by a council chaired by the president of the University of Jordan, and comprising on and off-campus members: the Academic Vice President for Scientific and Medical Faculties, the Dean of the Faculty of Science, the Dean of Academic Research, the Director of the centre, Ali Hamdi Mango, Hassan Ali Mango, Leila Sharaf, Ibrahim Izzedine and Hani Hind.

SMALL BUT MEANINGFUL: *The British government has made grants and donations, large and small, to various sectors in Jordan, so it was not unusual to find Deputy Chief of Mission Simon Collis at the Malha Society on Monday. There, Collis presented perhaps one of the British embassy's favourite charities with a gift of an ultrasound machine. The Malha Society, a charity based in Amman's Wadi Nasr neighbourhood and named after a West Jerusalem village provides general medical and dental care at its clinic. That the society is of particular interest to the folks at the British embassy is because long-time British embassy driver Hassan Jado is also mukhtar of the society. Collis, who said the embassy had donated the equipment for the society's dental care facility about a year ago, present the new ultrasound equipment to Malha Society President Ishaq Akhras. The embassy believes that often smaller donations such as these produce a more visible benefit in the community.*

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE: *Summer is far from over yet. Coming your way still is the annual Summer Programme of Darat al Funun. Starting with an opening ceremony under the patronage of Minister of Culture Talal Hassan on Aug. 20 and featuring the music of "Ya Rooh Run" composed by Tariq Nasser, the Darat has lined up art exhibitions, lectures, films and musical performances right through to the end of September. On exhibition will be graphic art from*



Darat Al Funun

Lebanon as well as the works of Youssef Aoun, Sahel Hiari, Samer Osama, Said Haddadine, Samia Zaru and Hussein Da'seh. Lectures will be presented by Youssef Aoun, Mazin Asfour, Mohammad Amiri, Khaz'al Majidi, Mohammad Rawas and Ibrahim Kawny. For listening audiences the Darat programme includes concerts and recitals by the National Music Conservatory, Al Bashir Group for Iraqi Music, and pianist Agnes Bashir. The films highlight artists of the New York School: Arshile Gorky, Jackson Pollock, Willem de Koonig and Franz Kline. For a schedule of the full programme contact Darat Al Funun at tel. 464-3251; E-mail: daratalfunun@nets.com.jo. or look them up on the Internet at http://www.daratalfunun.org.

ART @ INTERNET: *The American Center of the U.S. embassy in Amman will host an interactive telephone link-up featuring an expert from the Smithsonian Institution who will discuss with representatives of Jordan's art community "Promoting art institutions through the Internet." Joan Stahl, coordinator of the Image Collections, Research and Scholars Center at the Smithsonian, will speak from Washington to a participating audience in Amman. The event is to take place on Aug. 25 at the American Center in Abdoun at 4:00 p.m. and it will be followed by an Internet demonstration. For more information call 592-0101, ext. 2579.*

ALL SYSTEMS GO: *Meanwhile, a security official at the U.S. embassy told the Jordan Times that although President Clinton has asked U.S. embassies to reinforce their security in light of the bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the embassy in Amman had no plans to issue alerts to American citizens in Jordan.*

ARAB WOMEN'S TESTIMONIES: *Arab women authors is expected to hit British bookshops later this month. The collection, titled In the House of Silence and said to be "startlingly honest," complements the novels in the award-winning Arab Women Writers series edited by Jordanian-born Fadia Faqir, a lecturer in Arabic language and literature at the Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at the University of Durham. Through these "testimonies" the women describe their experiences and expose the often difficult conditions under which their narratives were woven. According to the Reading-based publisher Garnet Publishing, patterns emerge, which run throughout the women's testimonies — experiences of confinement, subjugation, the struggle for education and the eventual use of writing as a way out. Their accounts tell of their own reasons for writing, of how experiences in family life, politics, exile and even imprisonment have affected them and their work, and how their motivation has been both tested and reinforced by various setbacks and the struggle for recognition. Faqir's own first novel Nisanit was published by Penguin in 1988. Pillars of Salt, her second novel, was published in 1996 by Quartet. As series editor of Arab Women Writers she won the 1995 Women in Publishing New Venture Award.*



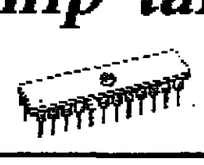
Fadia Faqir

SHOPPING AT SOTHEBY'S: *Anyone planning to be in London in October will find that Sotheby's is holding its annual Islamic Week. From October 12-16, the auction house's London galleries are filled with Arabic manuscripts, inlaid metalwork, embroidered textiles and much more promising to delight collectors, museums and anyone interested in Middle Eastern culture. This year the library of Peter Hopkirk, said to be one the largest collections of rare and important books on Central Asia and the Middle east in private hands, is to be sold on Oct. 13 and 14. The collection comprises 3,000 titles spanning the 19th and 20th centuries, and was put together by Hopkirk, a narrative historian and former journalist, over 40 years. Also on sale will be Oriental and European rugs and carpets, arts of the Islamic World as well as atlases, maps and travel accounts.*

Jennifer Hamarneh

The indomitable

chip talk



By Jean-Claude Elias

WITH THE widespread use of electronic mail, the Internet, the drastic drop in price of PCs and, generally speaking, the ever increasing computer usage and awareness worldwide, one may conclude that one day soon everyone will be computer literate and will live in perfect harmony with a perfectly user-friendly machine.

While this extrapolation may seem logical at first sight, I have serious doubts about it becoming a reality. My doubts are not based on facts from the computer world but from simpler small indicators in our daily life.

With various degrees of effort and to various levels of success the majority of people can learn their way around using technology. A minority has a special knack for it and can do wonders with it. But at the other end of the population spectrum another minority will never feel comfortable with technology, however simple or complex it may be.

Take VCRs (videocassette recorders) for instance, we all have a friend, a relative who can't programme it and doesn't want to hear about learning how to. Someone was recently telling me that he hated those wristwatches that had several functions. Even the basic day-and-date feature was too much for him! Many people need assistance when it comes to tuning their satellite receiver, programming their digital video camera, storing numbers in the memory of their cellular phone or using the remote control of their CD player.

There are numerous other examples of how even the simplest technology can deter some people.

It is therefore understandable that computers — by no means simple technology — still discourage some.

This minority, which responds to a certain psychological profile, would rather leave PCs to the others. It doesn't care if computers are truly becoming friendlier, if it is useful or not,learning to operate them, or if everybody else — almost — is using them. The indomitable, if I can call them so, may not be many but they do and will always exist. Those particularly good with PCs tend to look down upon them. But by leaving to others the responsibility of using the machines and by reaping the benefit anyway, this cast may simply be smarter than the rest of us.

Alarm grows over privacy threat from cyber snoops

By Arlene Gets
in Boston

THE EXPLOSIVE growth of databanks on the Internet has led to a new twist in the old clash between the public's right to know and the individual's right to privacy.

With information ranging from the price of your home to the number of malpractice judgments against the family doctor readily available online, people in highly computerised countries such as the United States are becoming increasingly anxious about the extent to which their private lives are circulating in cyberspace.

"In the past year, there has been growing public concern about computerised databases that collect and disseminate personal identifying information about consumers," noted the U.S. Federal Trade Commission in a report to Congress about online services that offer personal dossiers.

The report was compiled at the request of three U.S. senators investigating the boom in Internet sites that can locate, identify or verify the identity of people. These operations are touted as individual-reference services or look-up services.

"A vast amount of information about consumers is available through individual-reference services," says the commission's report, available on its website <http://www.ftc.gov>. "(This) ranges from purely identifying information, e.g., name and phone number, to much more extensive data, e.g., driving records, criminal and civil court records, property records and licensing records."

While many of these details have always been part of the public domain, the new technology has transformed retrieval from a cumbersome search to a feat that can be achieved simply by plugging a home computer into the global computer network.

Some databanks also offer information from non-public sources, such as the credit bureaux that keep detailed financial histories of every U.S. consumer. These credit histories have traditionally been available to organisations such as banks investigating a client's suitability for a loan. But easier online access now makes this information available to almost anyone who cares to look.

In some cases, would-be car buyers have been shocked to return from brief test drives to discover that sales agents have already used the identifying details on their driving licences to log into a databank to check their past for bankruptcies or tax problems.

Even where not all these details are available, information from credit bureaux can provide searchers with details such as someone's name, alias, birth date, social-security number and current and prior addresses. In the U.S., where this personal information is often used by consumers as a form of identification during telephone transactions such as banking, an unscrupulous person could use these intimate details to pose as someone else.

"The easy availability of this information could lead to increased incidence of identity theft," says the Federal Trade Commission report. "Many consumers are increasingly concerned that personal information is so widely available."

Alongside these concerns, however, is the recognition that databases can provide positive help.

Look-up services can assist police hunting for criminals, and there have been several cases of people, who were adopted as children, using the Internet to track down lost relatives.

Some states are also setting up their own databases to help residents make more informed choices about local services. Massachusetts, for example, recently unveiled a new website <http://www.state.ma.us/reg> to help consumers check up on the holders of the 530,000 or so professional licences issued by the state.

Information about groups — ranging from funeral directors and hairdressers to lawyers and doctors — is listed, for those wishing to confirm that an individual has met the state's professional requirements. Officials say they launched the service to give consumers more power to scrutinise those they hire.

Nonetheless, even websites such as this highlight the grey area between public and private information.

Although few professionals object to the publicising of their registration numbers or professional qualifications, most do not want their private home addresses made available to the global online community.

In Massachusetts, the local psychology board had to lobby against plans to list every complaint — unfounded or not — against individual psychologists. Eventually, the state agreed that only incidents that resulted in disciplinary action would be included. The psychology board then advised mental-health professionals to remove their home addresses from their licence information if they did not want it publicised.

For many individuals, there is no choice about what databanks say about them. Americans who donate money to federal election candidates, for instance, are listed on a non-partisan campaign-money page published by the Federal Election Commission <http://www.tay.com/FECInfo>. Others may have their name and phone numbers listed simply because they happen to be the neighbours of a person being sought by a data-collection agency.

State authorities, companies and government bodies such as the Federal Trade Commission are now looking at ways to curb abuse of online private information. Some look-up services last year formed the Individual Reference Services Group to develop a set of ethical and regulatory principles. In the future, members of the public may be able to demand exclusion from certain databanks.

The White House is considering introducing laws to govern the collection and use of personal information via the Internet. The threat of legislation has increased the pressure on companies to self-regulate. But the Internet's ability to transcend national borders may make it almost impossible to protect personal privacy in the age of globalisation and the information superhighway.

The writer is a former Southern Africa correspondent, now based in Boston, who writes a regular column on news from cyberspace.

— Gemini News

Iran asks Jordan to close Mujahedeen offices

(Continued from page 1)

Amman announced its support for Baghdad in its war against Iran. Diplomatic contacts were resumed in 1991, but since have remained minimal and, at times, tense.

Tehran's strong opposition to the Middle East peace process and its alleged funding of terrorist groups in the region, have compelled Amman to take a cautious political stand.

But according to an analyst specialising in Jordanian-Iranian relations, the conflicting positions on the Middle East peace process are no longer the issue.

"From the point of view of Tehran, the presence of the Mujahedeen Khalq in Jordan *has been the main obstacle to* changing the relationship," said the analyst.

He pointed to the fact that when Egypt signed its peace treaty with Israel, Tehran withdrew its ambassador from Cairo in protest. It did not follow the same course of action when Amman signed its 1994 treaty with the Jewish state, indicating an acceptance of Jordan's political realities.

During the OIC summit, Iranian officials in private demonstrated a surprising acceptance of Arab-Israeli reconciliation, and in particular Jordan's position with regards to the peace process.

Anani, who described relations with Tehran as "good," *did not disclose* to deputies how Jordan would respond to Tehran's demand to end the presence of Mujahedeen Khalq — seen as a trump card in Jordan's hand in its ties with Tehran.

But from Amman's perspective, it still has concerns over Iran's alleged backing of terrorist activities, albeit indirectly, aimed at destabilising Jordan — a charge persistently denied by Tehran.

Security officials have maintained that until Amman is sufficiently convinced that Iran is not supporting terrorism, it will remain cautious in its dealing with the Islamic state.

Iraq excludes Japan, Britain from food deal

(Continued from page 1)

its clandestine nuclear programme makes it impossible for the IAEA to investigate... the remaining questions and concerns relevant to this programme," said the letter, dated Tuesday.

"The director general advises the council that the limited activities currently undertaken in Iraq by the IAEA... fall far short of full implementation...and results in a significantly reduced level of assurance" than would be possible without restrictions.

The Vienna-based IAEA said last Friday that it will continue to carry out "limited" monitoring in Iraq, after Iraq said it would be barred from carrying out undeclared inspections.

Baghdad informed the Vienna-based IAEA orally on Thursday that it would no longer cooperate with visits to "undeclared" sites which are not already on an agreed list to be visited, said a spokesman.

Meyer said IAEA inspectors were continuing to carry out "daily" inspections, and were awaiting guidance from the Security Council on how to proceed.

Kingdom remains in search of definitive solutions to chronic water shortages

(Continued from page 1)

will be fully utilised by the year 2005, stripping the country of possibilities to find similar alternatives.

Hence, investment in water desalination is one of the ministry's major goals for the 21st century.

Under a proposed project, investors would be offered a business opportunity to desalinate 5 million cubic metre mcm per year of brackish groundwater located in yet untapped aquifers. This amount would be accessible for urban use after dissimulation.

The JD 14 million project, which could start in the year 2002, will include the construction of production wells, a desalination plant and water transfer links to two reservoirs at South Shuna.

Annual operational and maintenance costs for the 5 mcm desalination plant is estimated to reach JD 3.5 million.

Official figures suggest that by 2000, Jordan's population, growing at around 3.5 per cent per year, will require 1,257 million cubic metres (44,000 million cubic feet) of water to cover minimum needs while resources will be capable of supplying only 960 million cubic metres (33,600 million cubic feet).

Jordan, a largely desert country, relies mainly on rainwater to meet domestic, agricultural and industrial needs which is tapped from surface water sources such as rivers and renewable groundwater sources.

But Jordanians share most of their surface water with neighbours Syria and Israel whose control has partially deprived Jordan of its share. And groundwater sources are being overpumped resulting in lower water tables and declining water quality.

Frequent pipe bursts and seepage through the country's ageing water infrastructure are also costing Jordanians millions of cubic metres (feet) of water a year.

Jordan, officials insist, is working to remedy its critical water problem both by modernising water distribution networks with the help of foreign donors.

It is also securing extra water supplies through dam construction and water sharing agreements with its neighbours.

On signing a peace treaty with Israel in 1994, Jordan was guaranteed an additional 215 million cubic metres (7,500 million cubic feet) of water a year through new dams, a purification plant and diversion projects.

Under the agreement, Jordan is currently storing winter water in Israel's Lake Tiberias which it later reclaims in the summer, but of the total 215 million cubic metres promised, Jordan is currently receiving only about 60 million cubic metres (2,100 million cubic feet).

Earlier this year, King Hussein opened the country's sixth high capacity dam and the water ministry announced an agreement with Syria to build another on the Yarmouk River which marks the border between the two countries.

Although no date has yet been set for the dam's completion, the long-delayed plan is expected to provide Jordan with an additional 120 mcm (4,200 million cubic feet) of water per year.

But as climatic changes reduce rainwater levels and the population continues to grow, there seems no definitive solution to the ever-widening gap between Jordan's water supply and demand, water experts warn.

Israeli cabinet approves budget

(Continued from page 12)

invest in increased intelligence capabilities and missile defense, but declined to be more specific.

Israel and the United States are jointly developing the Arrow antimissile missile, at an estimated cost of $1.6 billion. Zeev Schiff, military analyst for the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, said the increased defense budget is needed in part to modernise the military's ageing equipment and ammunition. But he said Netanyahu's hard-line policies were also a factor.

"It looks very much like the government decided that it sees complete deadlock and hostilities in its future, and not just with the Palestinians," Schiff said. "You can't have a policy of confrontation and expect everything to be quiet."

Higher tourism from Arab Gulf states partially offsets decline of arrivals from Europe, U.S.

By Hind-Lara Mango
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Arab Gulf visitors increased by 36 per cent in the first seven months of 1998, helping offset a growing decrease in European and American tourists to Jordan during the same period, officials said Tuesday.

"We're 36 per cent over last year from the Gulf states," Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Aqel Biltaji told the Jordan Times.

But political uncertainty in the Middle East continued to cast a toll on the sensitive tourism industry with European and American arrivals dropping by 19 per cent during the same period, according to ministry figures obtained by the Jordan Times.

The number of German tourists dropped by 41 per cent, followed by Austrians — 39.5 per cent — Finnish — 27 per cent, Britons — 24 per cent and Swiss — 23 per cent.

Political tension in the region since Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu took over in June 1996 and Iraq's brief stand-off with the United Nations in February soured a favourable outlook for Jordan's tourism industry this year.

Jordanian officials last year blamed Netanyahu's policies for upsetting healthy growth forecasts for tourism in 1997.

"If the government of Israel would understand the dividend of tourism as a bridge to peace, then Netanyahu would change his policies to less hardline accords and agreements," Biltaji said Monday at the inauguration of a Tourist Guide Techniques Certificate Programme in Amman.

The month-long water pollution crisis this July further harmed the industry, scaring away many potential Gulf nationals who normally spend months out of their countries to escape sweltering summer heat.

Most flocked to Syria and Lebanon after spending only a few days in Jordan, border officials said.

But the troubled Middle East peace process was not slowing an unprecedented $500 million investments in the hotel industry by businessmen pinning hopes on a forecast surge in demand by the turn of the century when millions of Christian pilgrims will visit the region.

Jordan and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) running the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank have adopted the millennium motto of "Bethlehem to Bethany: Beyond the Jordan from Birth to Baptism" in their year 2000 campaign.

The World Bank allocated $25 million to the PNA to finance the scheme.

Tourism receipts reached JD550 million — about 37 per cent of Jordan's foreign currency earnings and 11 per cent of its gross domestic product.

Upper House committee discusses new AFM regulations with Marto

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Finance and Economic Affairs Committee of the Upper House met Wednesday with the director of the Jordan Securities Commission (JSC) Michel Marto and discussed with him recent measures by the JSC to regulate the activities of the Amman Financial Market (AFM).

The committee's chairman, Senator Kamal Sha'er, told reporters following the meeting which was held at the Parliament that Marto briefed them on the recent steps to regulate the work of the brokerage and finance firms operating at the stock market.

Sha'er noted that one of the regulations that were adopted by the commission was giving the general assembly of the private sector firms the freedom to fix the ways to increase capital.

Other regulations included giving the firms that issue bonds and shares the right to fix the prices of their issuances in "the way they find convenient," Sha'er said in a written statement that was given to reporters.

The issuance of the bonds and shares are stipulated to be through commercial banks and authorised financial companies.

The JSC law, which was issued last year, authorised the commission to establish the "Amman Bourse," which later on will take charge of supervising the activities of the stock market in the Kingdom.

During the meeting, which was attended also by the Central Bank of Jordan Governor Ziyad Fariz, the committee briefed the senators about the draft set of regulations to organise the work of the brokerage firms in the stock market, especially those aimed at enhancing the position of these firms.

On July 27, the JSC introduced a set of regulations, which are yet to be

(Continued on page 9)

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHMEISANI
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 12/08/1998

	PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
S	355.500	170.000	ARAB BANK	18.5	.88	55	5200	1164125	222.00	226.50	4.50+
	2.100	1.620	JOR.NATIONAL BK.	13.4	4.24	7	3575	5898	1.65	1.65	-
S	3.230	1.130	BANK OF JORDAN	E	0.00	8	5300	6042	1.16	1.14	.02-
S	2.680	1.550	INDUSTRIAL DEV.BK.	10.9	6.65	2	400	624	1.56	1.56	-
S	6.510	2.610	THE HOUSING BK.	20.0	3.17	120	68850	217707	3.08	3.15	.07+
S	3.450	1.790	JOR.KUWAIT BANK	.9	0.00	3	74	135	1.83	1.83	-
	.870	.580	JOR.GULF BANK	g	0.00	6	8900	5523	.62	.62	-
S	4.000	1.690	JOR.ISLAMIC BANK	17.8	0.00	12	4350	7538	1.73	1.74	.01+
	1.330	.930	UNION BK.SAV.INV.	P	0.00	1	300	294	1.03	.98	.05-
	1.060	.800	BEIT.AL-MAL (BEITNA)	4.0	0.00	2	200	163	.80	.82	.02+
	BANK SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 298.57	%CHG: +1.79		216	97149	1408048			
S	4.000	1.400	JERUSALEM INSUR.	9.5	5.71	2	6250	8750	1.40	1.40	-
	2.850	1.640	JOR FRENCH INSUR.	7.6	9.16	1	150	410	2.70	2.73	.03+
S	2.630	1.200	JORDAN GULF INSUR.	g	0.00	1	1000	1490	1.42	1.49	.07+
	INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 129.13	%CHG: +0.46		4	7400	10650			
S	2.240	1.470	JOR.ELECTRIC PWR.	10.1	5.32	8	3281	5066	1.54	1.55	.01+
	4.030	1.450	IRBID ELECTRICITY	14.6	4.24	1	100	236	2.45	2.36	.09-
+	1.500	.910	NATL. PORTFOLIO	35.9	0.00	16	13950	12565	.92	.90	.02-
S	9.500	5.100	ALRA'I	8.8	6.96	1	100	575	5.75	5.75	-
S	4.600	1.880	ARAB INTL.INV.EDUC.	9.8	2.02	16	13950	27704	1.97	1.98	.01+
+	1.830	1.210	UNIFIED CO.	5.3	9.17	15	3950	4765	1.23	1.20	.03-
	SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 111.17	%CHG: +0.08		57	35331	50910			
	4.000	1.840	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	11.9	5.47	20	23904	47606	1.94	2.01	.07+
	4.110	1.690	JOR.PHOSPHATE MINES	18.0	0.00	5	17000	28900	1.70	1.70	-
	6.500	4.750	ARAB POTASH CO.	24.4	4.04	1	200	990	4.85	4.95	.10+
	11.250	9.980	JOR. PETROL.REFINARY	10.4	8.28	6	2146	22963	10.70	10.73	.03+
S	1.570	1.000	WOOLEN INDUSTRIES	12.0	6.61	2	2050	2215	1.09	1.08	.01-
	1.820	1.060	INDUSTRIAL COMN.AGR.	63.2	0.00	2	300	321	1.08	1.07	.01-
S	5.740	2.400	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	7.4	2.78	49	29309	79151	2.66	2.70	.04+
S	5.800	1.230	JOR.CERAMIC IND.	5.4	8.00	1	850	1063	1.25	1.25	-
	1.440	1.020	JOR.PIPES MANFCT.	9.1	9.09	1	100	110	1.10	1.10	-
	6.350	4.700	DAR ALDAWA DV.INV.	6.8	6.19	14	2652	14795	5.44	5.65	.21+
	2.980	1.730	ARAB ALUM.IND.	13.7	13.51	1	500	925	1.78	1.85	.07+
	.590	.370	INTERMED.PETRO.CHEM.	g	0.00	2	600	230	.38	.40	.02+
S	2.300	.790	NATL.CABLE WIRE.MFAC	37.0	0.00	11	21550	17170	.81	.79	.02-
+	.730	.490	JOR. SULPHO-CHEM	9.1	0.00	5	1650	792	.49	.48	.01-
	1.470	1.150	ARAB PHARM.CHEM.	14.2	4.65	7	12747	16392	1.27	1.29	.02+
	.740	.390	KAWTHER INVEST.	g	0.00	36	39700	20729	.50	.53	.03+
S	1.300	.690	UNIV. MODN.INDS.	11.0	8.70	2	750	518	.69	.69	-
	1.040	.500	JOR.INDS.RESOURCES	g	0.00	1	250	130	.53	.52	.01-
	INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 89.05	%CHG: +1.69		202	193008	289398			
	GRAND TOTAL		INDEX: 183.59	%CHG: +1.66		479	332888	1759006			

PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 12/08/1998

N	1.000	1.000	JOR.INT.INSURANCE CO	E	0.00	1	500	500	1.00	1.00	-
	.500	.340	JOR.TRADE FAC.	g	0.00	7	4800	2112	.43	.44	.01+
	1.340	1.000	ZARA FOR INVESTMENT	65.6	0.00	1	3500	3500	1.00	1.00	-
	.800	.510	UNION INV.	g	0.00	1	7500	3825	.51	.51	-
	.620	.280	ARAB FIN.INVEST.	g	0.00	4	8100	2268	.29	.28	.01-
	.780	.620	AL-DAMLIYAH	36.9	0.00	2	248	155	.63	.63	-
	.270	.100	JOR.INDS.MATCH-JENCO	g	0.00	1	3000	330	.11	.11	-
	.600	.330	ARAB FOOD & MED.	g	0.00	2	3750	1303	.33	.35	.02+
	.430	.240	ARAB INTL.INV.TRD.	27.6	0.00	4	1000	240	.24	.24	-
	.450	.230	NATL. TEXTILE	P	0.00	3	3550	817	.23	.23	-
	.580	.360	NATL.MULT.ENG.MANICO	g	0.00	15	58000	21080	.36	.36	-
	.730	.570	RAZI PHARM.	E	0.00	8	12500	7250	.59	.58	.01-
	.740	.380	IRDS. CERAMIC	10.0	0.00	1	2000	760	.40	.38	.02-
N	.950	.550	ADVANCED PHARMA.IND.	g	0.00	7	16100	9177	.58	.57	.01-
	.500	.320	PEARL SAN. P. CONV.	E	0.00	1	250	100	.38	.40	.02+
N	.950	.330	OPTICALS HEARING CO.	P	0.00	8	8050	2989	.36	.38	.02+
	.760	.580	NAT.ALUMINIUM.	31.7	0.00	7	11750	7520	.64	.64	-
N	1.000	.690	AL-EKBAL PRINTING CO	10.7	10.82	4	1500	1058	.70	.70	-
	GRAND TOTAL					79	146130	65029			

REUTERS REUTERS
The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates — Prices as at 13/07/98 20:52

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.7777	0.6146	1.4828	146.08	1.5155	1749.00	2.0015	5.9450
DE Mark	0.5625	-	0.3454	0.8361	82.22	0.8523	984.80	1.1272	3.3482
GB Sterling	1.6272	2.8926	-	2.4158	237.85	2.4660	2849.12	3.2604	9.6844
CH Franc	0.6744	119.58	0.4137	-	98.42	1.0159	1176.71	134.92	4.0074
JP Yen	0.0068	1.2165	0.4203	1.0147	-	1.0371	11.97	137.15	4.0683
CA Dollar	0.6598	1.2916	0.4225	1.0566	1.04	-	1270.80	1.4551	4.3265
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0152	0.3508	0.0847	1199.18	0.8655	-	11.45	3.3952
NL Guilder	0.4996	88.69	0.3064	73.99	72.84	0.7660	872.49	-	2.9657
FR Franc	0.1682	0.2989	0.1033	24.9336	24.55	0.2548	33.70	33.7000	-

Middle Eastern Currencies

Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7090	3.7506	0.3770	3.6400	0.3071	3.6728	1517.00	3.4210
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	-	5.2900	0.5317	5.1340	0.4331	5.1803	2139.63	4.8251
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1890	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0819	0.98	404.47	0.9121
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8806	9.9485	-	9.66	0.8145	9.74	4023.87	9.0743
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0304	1.0304	-	0.0844	1.01	416.76	0.9398
Kuwait Dinar	3.2568	2.3091	12.2149	1.2278	11.85	-	11.96	4940.56	0.9398
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0212	0.1026	0.9911	0.0836	-	413.04	0.9314
Lebanese/1000	0.66	0.4674	2.4724	0.2485	2.3995	0.2024	2.4211	-	2.2551
Egyptian	0.2923	0.2072	1.0963	0.1102	1.0640	0.0898	1.0736	443.44	-

Energy

Oils	Last	revious
Brent	0.00	0.00
W. Texas	12.90	12.83
Bonny	0.00	0.00
Dubai	11.48	11.60
UL Gas	130.00	128.00

Mid-East Currencies

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4741	0.16385	0.39562	38.9621
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.48414	0.16732	0.40399	39.7867
KW Dinar	3.2568	5.79039	2.0016	4.83325	475.964
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.71698	1.62999	3.93546	387.597
CY Pound	1.9082	3.3881	1.1706	2.8261	278.414

Metal Prices

Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	283.3	283.8
Silver (oz's)	5.14	5.17
Platinum (oz's)	373.5	375.5
AL (3 Months)	1327	1330
CU (3 Months)	1621	1625
Zinc (3 Months)	1043	1046
Lead (3 Months)	546	549
NI (3 Months)	4135	4150

Libor Fixing

Period C'ncy	- 1 - Month	- 3 - Months	- 6 - Months	- 1 - Year
USD	5.6406	5.6875	5.7188	5.7500
GBP	7.7266	7.7109	7.6953	7.6602
JPY	0.6781	0.6484	0.6484	0.6563
DEM	3.4688	3.5000	3.6250	3.7813
FRF	3.5000	1.8203	1.9375	2.0820
CHF	1.7188	3.5625	3.6250	3.8125
ITL	5.0190	4.8680	4.6160	-

Main Equity Indices

Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pr Cls
NewYork	DOW JONES	8547.81	84.96	1	8564.55	8460.06	8462.85
Newyork	S&P 500	1082.49	13.51	1.26	1084.26	1068.98	1068.98
London	FT-SE 100	5462.2	29.4	0.54	5494.3	5403.6	5432.8
Tokyo	NIKKIE 225	15378.97	-28.02	-0.18	15534.1	15269.8	15407
Paris	CAC 40	3945.7	99.72	2.59	3945.7	3872.07	3845.98
Frankfurt	DAX	5402.37	133.97	2.54	5425.02	5340.96	5268.4

Energy

Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/lbs)	122.75	Spot
Cocoa ($/ton)	1841	Spot
Sugar ($/ton)	266.1	Spot
Wheat ($/ton)	0	Spot
Soya (c/lbs)	23.27	Spot
Tea (stg/kg)	125	Spot
Barley ($/bsh)	0	Spot
Rice ($/ton)	415	Spot

* JOD Cross Rates

Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
GB Sterling	1.1548	1.1606
DE Mark	0.3977	0.3997
CH Franc	0.4752	0.4776
FR Franc	0.1186	0.1192
JP Yen	0.4836	0.486
NL Guilder	0.3527	0.3545
IT Lira	0.4033	0.4053

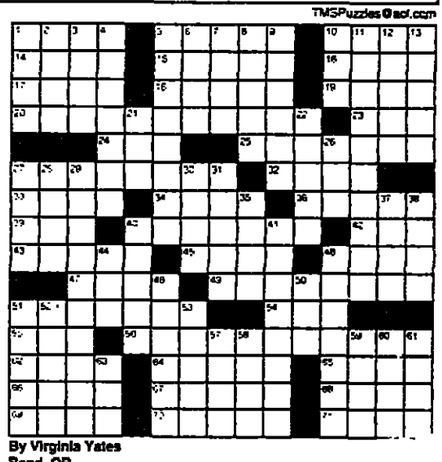
* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

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THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

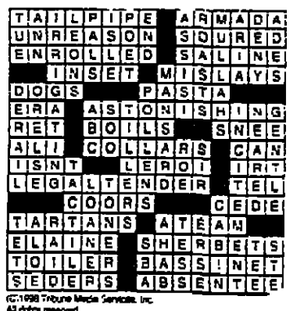
TMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Virginia Yates
Bend, OR

ACROSS
1 Second Greek letter
5 Junk
10 Security device
14 Figure-skater's jump
15 From now on
16 Son of Judah
17 Mindset
18 Computer key
19 __ Von Bismarck
20 With unresolved problems
23 Conform strictly
24 Utter sharply
25 Restrains pet with a rope
27 Zodiac sign
32 Expensive
33 Sam or Trevor
34 Small particle
36 Atlanta university
39 Atmosphere
40 Behind the eight ball
42 Pizza order
43 Endure
45 Roll-call call
46 Exploited laborer
47 Self-absorbed
49 Down-to-earth types
51 Italy, figuratively
54 Downing Street address
55 *Be in poor* health
56 Entangled
62 Vivacity
64 Struck powerfully, old-style
65 Religious statue
66 Allow to use
67 Some rapiers
68 Child's taboo
69 Advantage
70 Fresh residences
71 Expanded

DOWN
1 __ au rhum
2 Way out
3 Shade of blue
4 Other finisher
5 Actor
6 Russo of "Tin Cup"
7 Pot starter
8 Bloodhound's trail
9 Gathered, as sheep
10 *Old card game*
11 Facing defeat
12 Supply the food and drink
13 Has the answers
21 Bladed pole
22 Spirited mount
26 Bad actor
27 Literary snippets
28 Say uncle
29 Coming apart at the seams
30 Zion National Park's state
31 Sedate
35 Stick in the mud
37 Mob melee
38 Cravings
40 Nanny
41 Apple-pie order
44 Seize suddenly
46 Immobilizing
48 Bruited
50 Albanian money
51 Data display
52 Increased one's staff
53 Pace
57 Activist
58 List element
59 Whiff
60 Vocal inflection
61 Reduce speed
63 Pindar poem



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Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF© By Glasbergen



"This one has a slight defect— but when it starts to boil, you get a great massage!"

JUMBLE® THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion

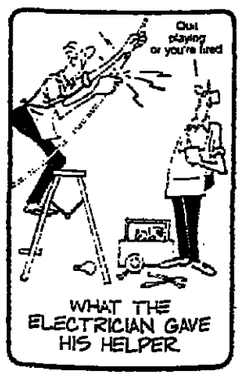
Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words

ROBIT

TOTID

GUAJAR

DOLIBY



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: A _____ _____ (Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles Answer: FOIST KNACK CAVORT COSTLY
Bought by a broker at a cattle ranch — STOCK IN STOCK

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Business

A review of new

First stage of An entrance will be

THE FIRST stage of "Jord... the implementation ... which had started in Novemb... will be completed on sche... in November 1998, the may... the Municipality of Great... said recently. The fi... stretches for 2 kilometr... Wadi Haddadeh up to t... Monument Street... Mamdouh Al Abbadi ind... that the second stage is ... immediately after t... completion of the first stage. T... will begin from th... Monument Street up to t... Wadi Al Teil Forest."... objective of implementin... project is to have an artery th... connect the western ar... areas of Amman with th... parts of the capital as we... Jordan Valley in ord... vehicle movement and connec... between the various parts ... Abbadi said. H... added that the University Roa... the main artery that link... to the northern parts of th... is to be congested wit... traffic during most part ... and creating many tran... problems as a result.

HOROSCOP

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, AUG...

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media S...

March 21 to April 19) Venus is ... This is going to be a good time ... in a romantic relationship, and ... make a commitment. Today, for exa... others to start talking about it. You ... how expensive it's going to be, fo... soul.

APRIL (April 20 to May 20) You're ... the experience, or teaching it ... doubt it's the latter, that's always the ... going to be in. Venus is going into Le... make your home life a bit easier ... mind, and Leo is in the area symboli... So, tonight, relax and enjoy it.

TAURUS (May 21 to June 21) The sun is ... sign into Leo and the moon is in Taur... often bring things to a screeching h... well with romance, but a commitm... style required. If this causes a proble... you will face next. Just make the co... with it.

CANCER (June 22 to July 21) Venus ... organized blessing. Venus means poss... your Second House of money. The b... also means love. How can that be b... one may want more expensive to... them for the next few weeks. You ma... situation developing already.

LEO (July 22 to August 21) Venus is g... today, which is absolutely marvellou... of love, of course, and yours is a ver... hits the heart, and indicates romance ... With Venus here for the next few m... colorful things are bound to happen.

VIRGO (August 22 to September 22) Yo... an opportunity today. To get there, ... roundabout route. You may have ... rather quiet for a while and if an olde... you might have to postpone plans ev... ask for advice. If you see what nee... you.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) ... your friends and do something fun. ... slowing you down this time. Yo... to play and take care of business t... generate extra work so you ca... Your friends will still be in the ... that's handled.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) ... period to ponder the ramifications of ... soon. You should do the same or the ... decision that's not in your best int... long to get things to go their way, of ... even know what your way is if you d... back up.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to D... in a more practical mood, finally. ... down and take care of business. ... has stacked up in your absence. ... been mental, and not physical, b... a lot to be done. Don't procrastinat...

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January ... star. Love and money are also linked ... partnership could be good for you in m... A good partnership could develop, i... goal. Work on that tonight. By ... soon, you'll be able to afford somethi... alone.

AQUARIUS (January 21 to February 19) ... hard for the last couple of days, ... ponder each move carefully. Alth... creative, you're also very cautious. ... You could catch a mistake your p... never any worse. He or she is thinkin... about business, so watch out.

PISCES (February 20 to March 20) Ke... walls. They're giving you an advanta... a difficult job, the easier it becomes ... only another way to make money ... show off your creativity. You won't ... talk, however. Whatever you're doin... decisively.

Birthstone of August: Peridot — Gold...

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

First stage of Amman's new northern entrance will be ready in November

** THE FIRST stage of "Jordan Street," the implementation of which had started in November 1997, will be completed on schedule in November 1998, the mayor of the Municipality of Greater Amman said recently. The first stage stretches for 7.4 kilometres form Wadi Haddadeh up to the "Martyr Monument Street."

Mayor Mamdouh Al Abbadi indicated that the second stage is to commence immediately after the completion of the first stage. The second phase will begin from the Martyr Monument Street up to the Abu Nseir suburb. The last, and final, stage that will follow will extend to "Wasfi Al Tell Forest."

"The objective of implementing this project is to have an artery that would connect the western and northern areas of Amman with the eastern parts of the capital as well as with downtown Amman in order to facilitate movement and connections between the various parts of the city," Abbadi said. He explained that the University Road, which is the main artery that links Amman to the northern parts of the Kingdom, is now congested with heavy traffic during most part of the day and creating many transport problems as a result.

Abbadi pointed out that the Jordan Street will not only have positive effects on easing traffic congestion (in the capital) but also on economically reviving the area through which it will be passing. "The street will become economically attractive because of easy transportation and abundance of manpower in addition to the fact that the street will be Amman's northern entrance," he said.

Asked about the houses that were demolished, the mayor clarified that the buildings were originally in violation of regulations as they were constructed in the space designated as a street. "However, the municipality has resolved the issue in a humanitarian way," he said. "We did not tackle the problem bureaucratically as our objective was to open the street without harming the interest of the residents."

"The owners of the houses that were demolished were given rewarding compensation that helped them secure alternative residence," he added. "In turn, the street contributed to reviving the area economically and that benefited thousands of the inhabitants in that area," Mayor Abbadi concluded (Al Dustour).

Arab Bank rating to boost global role

By Suleiman Al Khalidi
Reuters

AMMAN — Jordan-based Arab Bank, one of the region's major financial institutions, said Wednesday its first assigned credit-rating reflects its financial strength and will enhance a diversified global role.

U.S.-based Thomson Bank Watch Inc. last week assigned Arab Bank an AA minus rating, substantially higher than Jordan's own sovereign ceiling which is below investment grade.

"This will allow us to access cheaper funds and will give the bank the standing it deserves in international markets," Arab Bank Group chairman Abdul Majeed Shoman told Reuters.

Two other rating agencies, Standard and Poor and Moody's are also expected to issue their ratings soon. Cyprus-based Capital Intelligence has told the bank it will assign it a short term A1 and long term A plus ratings, bankers said.

Arab Bank, with over $11.3 billion in deposits and total assets worth $22.9 billion, is not short of liquidity but global ratings will allow it to raise its returns and diversify its operations further, Shoman said.

"It will provide global investment clients with more comfort and there are large firms that do not deal with banks which have no ratings," Shoman said.

Arab Bank's unique capital structure in which 80 per cent of its consolidated operations are conducted outside of Jordan enabled the bank's ratings to be considered independent of the sovereign rating for Jordan, the agency said.

Set up in Jerusalem in 1930, Amman-based Arab Bank's growth is tied to its regional and global expansion as it evolves into one of the region's major financial institutions, overcoming major political upheaval in the Middle East.

"While the bank is headquartered in Amman, the overall country risk profile resembles some of the best banks domiciled in both Western Europe and the U.S." Thomson said.

It said the bank was able to weather any future regional unheaval because it had more than sufficient asset liquidity to repay foreign currency obligations.

Arab Bank, with over 300 branches globally, was playing a move diversified international banking role as it adapted to a more competitive global banking environment, Shoman said.

The bank, with a strategy focused on providing trade finance services for Arab communities world-wide, has shifted away from a historically conservative image.

Its long-term investments have grown 16 per cent in the first half of 1998. Liquidity in conservative inter-bank placements and government securities and cash on hand has fallen to around 50 per cent from 75 per cent a few years ago.

The bank's earnings are bolstered by cautious asset/liability management as well as its asset quality lending strategy and geographic diversification, the agency said.

Arab Bank, capturing the lion's share of between 35-40 per cent of total deposits in Jordan, has also lent critical support to the Kingdom's monetary system during periods of difficulty.

It came to the defence of the dinar in a severe crisis in 1989 and was instrumental in calming investors in a period dominated by fears over King Hussein's health by injecting millions of dollars to the market.

"People draw many lessons from the bank's experience in view of its history through 68 years of its existence in which it passed through many crises and come out unscathed," Shoman said.

The bank is one of the Arab World's largest privately held banks with only 11 per cent owned by Arab governments, including Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

The rest is owned by long term investors.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, AUGUST 13, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Venus is going into Leo today. This is going to be a good time for you to get involved in a romantic relationship, and more specifically to make a commitment. Today, for example, would be a good day to start talking about it. You'll want to talk about how expensive it's going to be, for one thing. Be practical.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You're either gaining valuable experience, or teaching it to somebody. Hopefully it's the latter; that's always the more enviable position to be in. Venus is going into Leo today, which could make your home life a bit easier. Venus brings good luck, and Leo is in the area symbolising home and family. So, tonight, relax and enjoy it.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) The sun is in Leo, Venus is going into Leo and the moon is in Taurus. Those conditions often bring things to a screeching halt. You're still doing well with romance, but a commitment will definitely be required. If this causes a problem, then that's what you will face next. Just make the commitment and get on with it.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) Venus goes into Leo today, a mixed blessing. Venus means possibility, and it'll be in your Second House of money. The bad news is that Venus also means love. How can that be bad? Well, your loved one may want more expensive tokens of your affection for the next few weeks. You may have noticed this situation developing already.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Venus is going into your sign today, which is absolutely marvellous. Venus symbolises love, of course, and yours is a very loving sign. Leo rules the heart, and indicates romance, among other things. With Venus here for the next few months, all sorts of wonderful things are bound to happen.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You could spot a fabulous opportunity today. To get there, you'll have to take a roundabout route. You may have to keep this endeavour quiet for a while and if an older person finds out, you might have to postpone plans even longer. So, don't ask for advice. If you see what needs to be done, just do it.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You'd love to join your friends and do something fun, but it's money that's slowing you down this time. You don't have enough to play and take care of business too. Look for a way to generate extra work so you can make more money. Your friends will still be in the mood to party after that's handled.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Everybody's in the mood to ponder the ramifications of every course of action. You should do the same or the others could make a decision that's not in your best interest. They're all trying to get things to go their way, of course. They won't even know what your way is if you don't tell them, so speak up.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You're in a more practical mood, finally. You'll be able to settle down and take care of business. Quite a bit of business has stacked up in your absence. That absence may have been mental, and not physical, but either way, there's a lot to be done. Don't procrastinate.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Romance is in the air. Love and money are also linked. It looks like this relationship could be good for you in more ways than one. A good partnership could develop, if you have a mutual goal. Work on that tonight. By pooling your resources, you'll be able to afford something you couldn't get alone.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You've been pushing hard for the last couple of days, but now you need to ponder each move carefully. Although you are very creative, you're also very cautious. Today, that's sensible. You could catch a mistake your partner makes before it gets any worse. He or she is thinking more about love than about business, so watch out.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Keep practising new skills. They're giving you an advantage. The more you do a difficult job, the easier it becomes. Soon you'll have not only another way to make money, but another way to show off your creativity. You won't have time to dilly-dally, however. Whatever you're doing needs to be done decisively.

Birthstone of August: Peridot — Golden Quartz

Committee meets Marto

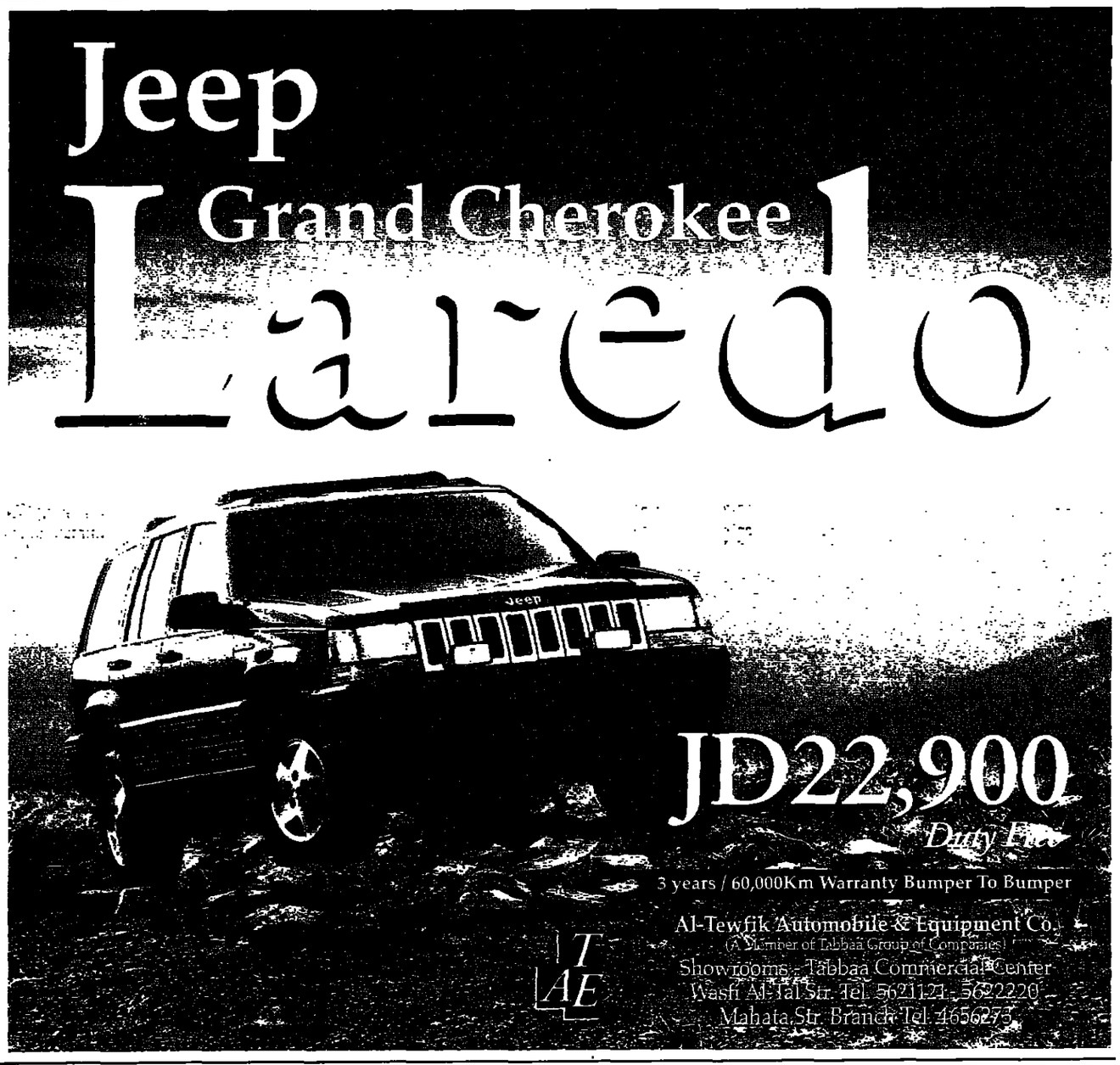
(Continued from page 8)

finalised after a thorough consultation with the concerned parties, which included among other things permitting foreign firms to open brokerage firms in the country.

The 70-article draft regulations are aimed at attracting new investors and enhancing the capital market in the Kingdom.

"The Finance Committee expressed its full support to the arrangements taken by the JSC to organise the AFM activities and the regulations adopted to enhance the financial companies in the stock market," Sha'er said.

The new regulations are aimed at sparing Jordan any possible setbacks, like those which occurred lately in Asian and South American markets, the senator said in the written statement.



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Vacek upsets new No. 1 Rios in first-round shocker

CINCINNATI (AFP) — Newly crowned world No. 1 Marcelo Rios suffered an upset loss 24 hours after seizing the ranking summit, opening the door for a potential return to the top for Pete Sampras.

Second-seeded Rios played poorly in a disheartening 6-3, 6-2 loss to Czech Daniel Vacek in the second round at the 2.45 million-dollar ATP Championship.

"I missed too much and was not able to play my game," Rios said. "It's harder to see the ball at night. I won't let this loss bother me too much. I made a lot of mistakes but he didn't overpower me."

The 22-year-old Chilean has yet to win a match as World No. 1 in his second time atop the ratings. Rios topped the table during the month of April but was unable to play due to an elbow injury.

Rios said that he is not prepared to worry about his computer ranking.

"It's how you play on the court. That's what matters," Rios said. "There was no extra pressure on me. If I'm No. 1, it's because I deserve it. I still have my confidence and I have two events before the U.S. Open. I'm not worried."

The upset of Rios gives Sampras, who has ended the year atop the rankings since 1993, a chance to regain the top spot two weeks before the U.S. Open, the final major championship of the year.

The American begins defense of his title here on Wednesday in the second round after a bye. He will have a possible chance to take back the honour if he gets to the Sunday final.

Rios went down in the first set in 31 minutes and fell to 1-5 down in the second against Vacek, ranked 53rd in the world. But the Czech journeyman suffered a case of nerves, producing four double faults while serving for the match.

Rios tumbled out of the event as Vacek finally steeled himself and held for victory on his fourth match point after 62 minutes.

Andre Agassi needed three sets to overcome German Nicolas Kiefer, scoring a 4-6, 7-6 (7-3), 6-2 first-round victory.

"I don't think you show up at any tournament and play your best in the first round," Agassi said. "You've got to get through the days when you're not feeling your greatest."

Kiefer moved to within two points from victory late in the second set. The 25th-ranked Kiefer missed an overhead which would have given him two match points. Agassi rallied and won.

"I played very aggressive today," said Kiefer. "But he has played the best tennis of the past four or five weeks."

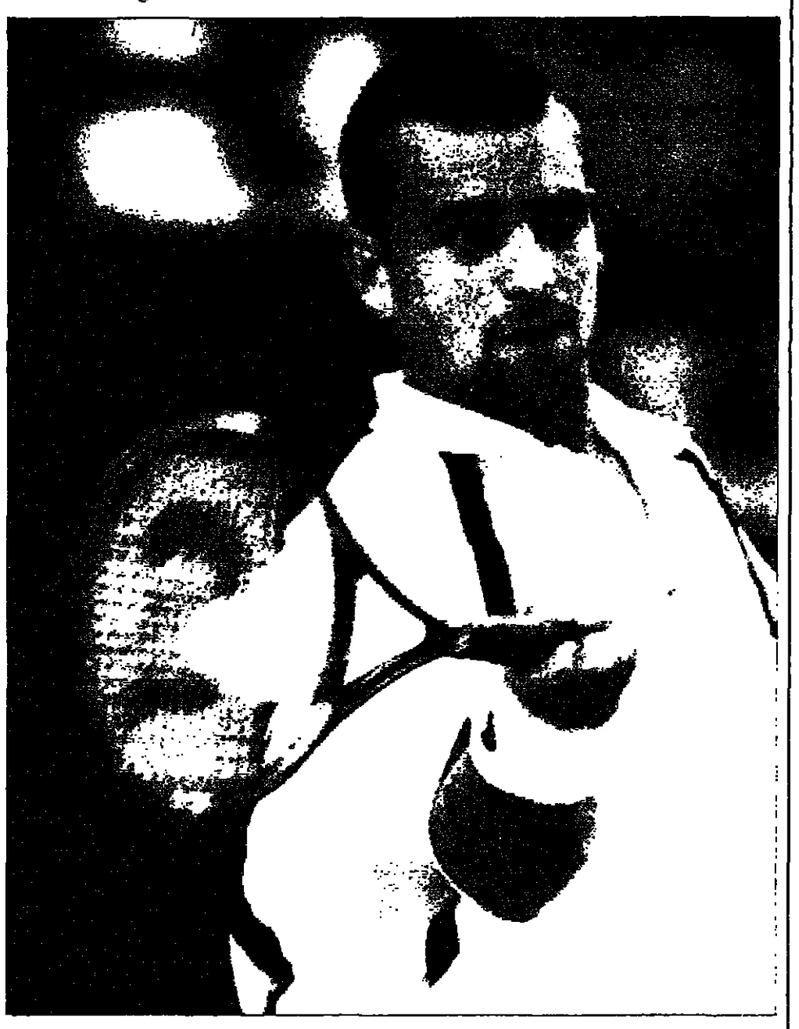
Austria's Thomas Muster, who lost last year's final here, kept up the pressure on Briton Tim Henman, sending him out in round one by 6-4, 7-5.

Former World No. 1 Muster, still ultra-competitive as an over-30 and holding a No. 24 ranking, sealed Henman's fate with a break for 6-5 on a double-fault from the Briton.

Former champion Michael Chang beat Todd Woodbridge of Australia 6-1, 3-6, 6-2. Wodforde's doubles partner, Mark Woodforde, went out to Czech Martin Damm, 6-4, 3-6, 6-2.



Michael Chang



Nicolas Kiefer

Djorkaeff back to face Baggio threat at Inter Milan

MILAN (AFP) — French World Cup winner Youri Djorkaeff returned to his adopted home here on Tuesday, hoping that Roberto Baggio will not take his job at Inter Milan.

Djorkaeff's future has been in doubt since Inter president Massimo Moratti signed Baggio from Bologna two months ago. Both are playmakers, though both can also be used as strikers by coach Gigi Simoni.

The Frenchman insisted on Tuesday there would be no overlap with Baggio, having already won the World Cup alongside another creative player, Zinedine Zidane, now back at Serie A rivals Juventus.

"Playing with Baggio or anyone else will not be a problem for me. I'll do what ever the coach asks," he said.

"However, I've played and won with Zidane and although I don't know Baggio, I think he plays in a similar way to 'Zizou'. First of all though, I will have to talk to Simoni and then with the club president."

As for his much-discussed position on the pitch, Djorkaeff said: "Last season I played more up front. It's not a position I like much, but the team needed me there because (Ivan) Zamorano (Nwankwo) Kanu were injured.

"But if Ronaldo scored a lot of goals last season, perhaps a bit of that is down to me too."

Looking back at France 98, Djorkaeff said: "The World Cup has changed my life, but it hasn't changed me as a person.

"It was a wonderful experience; when I went back to my home town (near Lyon) to receive a medal from the mayor, there were thousands of people there waiting for me. It was all very emotional.

"And then they named a stadium after my father Jean and I ... all those things were just unforgettable."

As for the transfer talk, he said: "Every year I travel for free; with all the places I'm supposed to have been going to, according to the newspapers, I could have been round the world five or six times by now. "Instead, I'm still here."

'Ronaldo's under too much pressure'

MILAN (AFP) — Ronaldo is under far too much pressure according to Brazil teammate Cafu, who is still haunted by the sight of the striker's convulsions on the day of the World Cup final.

Cafu is back training this week with Italian Serie A side AS Roma, but the events of July 12 in Paris are still fresh in the defender's mind.

"I'm sure that Ronaldo will be back at his best with Inter Milan," he said. "But we all have to forget what happened on a very difficult day for him.

"Everywhere he goes, people are asking him about that incident.

He is young and he is under too much pressure, he has too much responsibility.

"It's absurd for a youngster who's 21 years old. Inter have to help him, and it's only right for him to have had a longer holiday than others."

Casting back to the day of the final, Cafu said: "When I went into his room and I saw him lying there, having convulsions, I was frightened.

"They were terrible moments, and are best forgotten."

Ronaldo later recovered and joined the rest of the team at the Stade de France, ready to play, even though he had been left off the original team sheet issued by the organisers.

To conceal what was going on behind the scenes, Brazil did not come out onto the pitch for the usual pre-match warm-up.

"And that was why," Cafu said. "When we arrived at the stadium, Edmundo was supposed to play, and then Ronaldo arrived.

"We stayed down below because we didn't want people to see he wasn't there, so as to avoid any controversy."

As for the decision to play Ronaldo, Cafu said: "Someone had to take the decision, and the last word is always with the coach. We didn't know anything about that, but he seemed alright when we were getting ready."

Brazil went on to get a 3-0 hiding in the final from the host nation, but Cafu tried to deflect the blame away from Ronaldo.

"That's not why we lost," he said. "France were the better team.

But we didn't feel confident when we walked out, we didn't know if he could play."

Looking ahead, Ronaldo's team are already being tipped among the favourites for the Italian league title."

"But this season it's got to be AS Roma's turn," said Cafu.

"We've all got to believe that we can win either the championship or a cup.

"Being tipped doesn't count for anything when you take the field, it's the best team on the day who wins. Brazil were favourites to win the World Cup, but then..."

Rangers' Euro dream kept on track by a prince and a pauper

PARIS (AFP) — High-spending Glasgow Rangers saw off 10-man PAOK Salonika 2-0 in their hard-fought UEFA Cup clash Tuesday, thanks to a man who cost them millions and another who did not cost them a penny.

The Scottish side, desperate to end their success drought in Europe, won the second preliminary round, first leg encounter against the Greeks thanks to second-half goals from Andrei Kanchelskis and 'Rod' Wallace.

Ukrainian winger Kanchelskis, who cost the club a Scottish transfer record of £5.5 million ($8.5 million) in the close season, scored in the 55th minute.

Wallace, meanwhile, a free transfer from Leeds United, added the killer blow in the 68th minute with a curling effort from 20 yards.

Rangers, one of Europe's richest clubs and who warmed up for the season by signing eight major names for around 25 million pounds ($40 million), were frustrated early on only to be gifted the perfect chance of victory when Salonika's Triantafilos Macheridis was sent off after just eight minutes.

Macheridis's dismissal — for a clumsy foul on Gordon Durie and then a second booking when he flung the ball away from a free kick — paved the way for Rangers as the home side established a cushion before the second leg in Greece in two weeks.

But the Scots, who won nine domestic championships in a row up to 1997, had to work hard to break throughh the Greeks' blanket defence.

Another Greek side, AEK Athens, like Rangers a dominant force in their own championship but yet to win a European trophy, came away from Hungarian club Ferencvaros beaten 4-2.

Yugoslavia's Red Star Belgrade, the 1991 European Champions Cup winners, did better with a 2-1 win against Rotor Volgograd but conceded a crucial second-half goal to leave them with a difficult journey to the Russian club in two weeks' time.

Hajduk Split of Croatia, meanwhile, totally dominated their Swedish visitors Malmo but wasted their good work to draw 1-1.

Elvis Brajkovic put the home side ahead on the stroke of half-time when he headed home an inswinging cross from the right at the far post.

But Malmo then produced a shock equaliser when Olafur Bjarnason played a neat one-two on the right hand side of the box and drilled the ball home in the 72nd minute.

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SPORTS IN BRIEF

Zagallo sues Romario

RIO DE JANEIRO (AFP) — Brazil's sacked coach Mario Zagallo is filing a $1 million claim for defamation against star forward Romario, his lawyer said Tuesday. Zagallo is to sue the player after it was reported a caricature of the former coach appeared on a toilet door in a bar co-owned by Romario. "At the end of this week we will be lodging legal proceedings against Romario for defamation for a very high sum which should pass the million dollar mark," lawyer Paulo Cesar Pinheiro Carneiro told AFP here. Romario, struggling with injury, was excluded from Brazil's World Cup team by Zagallo at the eleventh hour. Pinheiro said Romario had used the picture to get free publicity for his bar.

Freeman heads Oceania team

SYDNEY (AFP) — World 400m champion Cathy Freeman heads the Oceania track and field team announced here Wednesday for next month's IAAF World Cup in Johannesburg. Australians dominate the 45-member Oceania team with 36 representatives, the remainder comprising New Zealanders for the September 11-13 meet, which brings together athletes from eight regions of the world. Freeman will be joined by leading high-profile Australians including young sprint sensation Matt Shirvington, javelin thrower Joanna Stone and high jumper Tim Forsyth, all included on Tuesday in the Australian team for next month's Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur. A few athletes, headed by sprinter Melinda Gainsford-Taylor and hurdler Kyle Vander-Kuyp, have chosen to bypass the South African meet to complete preparations for the Commonwealth Games, which will be held straight after the World Cup.

Tyson decision set for Friday

TRENTON (AFP) — Former heavyweight champion Mike Tyson will learn here Friday if his boxing license has been restored. Maureen Sczpanski, a spokeswoman for the New Jersey Department of Law, said a hearing panel will announce a decision at its public meeting scheduled here on Friday morning. Tyson and his lawyers made a pitch to officials here hoping to have his license reinstated after it was revoked in July of 1997 by Nevada officials for his biting of Evander Holyfield during their title fight. Tyson had to wait one year for the chance to reapply. Should he be rejected here he would have to wait another year before applying to New Jersey officials.

Dolan, Bennett falter

CLOVIS, California (AFP) — Diana Munz outswam reigning world and Olympic champion Brooke Bennett while Chris Thompson took advantage of an asthma attack to Tom Dolan to win at the U.S. Swimming Championships. Munz, who finished second to Bennett in January's world championship at Perth, avenged the loss by winning the 800-metre freestyle here Tuesday in eight minutes, 31.74 seconds. "I'm just amazed I beat her," said Munz, who finished exactly four seconds ahead of second-place Bennett. Thompson became the sixth-fastest American and 15th-fastest swimmer in men's 800m freestyle history, passing Dolan midway into the race to take the lead for good on his way to a victory in 7:58.26. Dolan slowed after the asthma attack and finished 14th in 8:15.56 to ensure he will miss out on the event at next year's Pan Pacific Swim Championships in Sydney, in the same pool that will be used for the 2000 Olympic Games. "I knew he was going out fast," Thompson said of Dolan. "I was just hoping to keep up with him. After that I didn't know how far ahead I was."

Seeds fall at Boston Cup

BOSTON (AFP) — Fifth seed Elena Likhovtseva and sixth seed Joanette Kruger were ousted without finishing their matches here Tuesday in a rain-halted first round at the WTA Boston Cup. Russia's Likhovtseva retired trailing Germany's Andrea Glass 6-1, 4-2, while France's Nathalie Dechy beat South Africa's Kruger in a walkover. Another seed, number four Silvia Farina of Italy, trailed American Mary Joe Fernandez 4-1 when storms halted their match. Two seeds advanced Tuesday with number three Lisa Raymond beating Amy Frazier 6-4, 6-2 in a matchup of Americans and Austria's Barbara Schett beating American Kristina Brandi 6-4, 6-0.

Brazil elect new coach

RIO DE JANEIRO (AFP) — Brazil Tuesday elected Vanderley Luxemburgo as its new coach to replace Mario Zagallo, sacked after the former world champions lost their crown to France last month. Luxemburgo, aged 46, coaches at Sao Paulo club Corinthians and will continue his duties until the end of the year. He was presented at a press conference by the Brazilian Football Confederation headquarters Tuesday. Zagallo, a 66-year-old veteran, was at the helm when Brazil went down to a humiliating 3-0 World Cup final defeat to France in Paris. His contract had been due to expire in September but was cut short. Luxemburgo, unlike Zagallo, has never played for Brazil.

Sydney military in pre-Olympic training

SYDNEY (AFP) — Australian military helicopters swooped between Sydney's skyscrapers and around its landmark bridge and Opera House Wednesday in an anti-terrorist exercise ahead of the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

The ten Army Black Hawk helicopters and their crews will train in the city for two weeks to prepare for their security role during the Games.

They will hover as close as nine metres (30 feet) from buildings and practice dropping crack Special Air Service Regiment soldiers down ropes onto some of the city's highest structures.

"The reason for conducting this training is to ensure that our Counter Terrorist Force is equal to the task, should a terrorist incident occur," Special Forces Commander Brigadier Philip McNamara said.

"The ultimate objective, should it become necessary, is to save hostage lives," he said.

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Zidane wants more

TURIN (AFP) — Not content with the World Cup, Juventus midfielder Zinedine Zidane is now setting his sights on European Cup glory.

The Frenchman, whose two early goals ripped the heart out of Brazil in last month's final, is training with the Italian champions this week. And he is clearly looking forward to the new season.

"I can't deny that something changes after you win the World Cup and score two goals in the final, but I have to say that I feel exactly the same as I did before," he told the Corriere dello Sport.

"When I arrived at Juventus, I had to work hard to become what I am, and winning the World Cup was partly down to the work I do here.

"But now I'm back training, just like last year and the year before that. I've already put the World Cup behind me now, and I just want to do well and to go on winning — something important like the European Cup, especially as I've lost the last two finals."

He went on: "It's true, there will be more responsibility on me next season as a world champion, but I only hope that I can do more than I have done in the past, both for myself and for Juventus."

The coming season will be another gruelling test for his side, with all their major rivals having been active on the transfer market.

"We know what we have to do and we'll do it even more intensely than before because otherwise we won't win anything," he said.

"And we all know that the other clubs are stronger than they were last season. Parma, Lazio, Inter and AC Milan have really improved a lot. "It's going to be a great competition."

Zidane, who dismissed talk of doping in Italian football, also spared a thought for his teammate Alessandro Del Piero, who came back from injury to have a miserable World Cup with Italy.

"Ale got injured just before the finals, just like I did before Euro 96, and when he came back things didn't go well for him," Zidane said.

"But he's still young and he's still got time — time enough even to win the next World Cup."

I can win the world title — Schumacher

MILAN (AFP) — Michael Schumacher shrugged off Mika Hakkinen's commanding lead in the Formula One world championship on Wednesday and staked his claim to the title.

Ferrari are working on improvements to the car after a disappointing show at Hockenheim, where the victorious Finn extended his lead in the table.

Schumacher said: "I'm 16 points behind the top driver and it's not as good as being 16 points in front. These are difficult times.

"But we are all committed to doing our best and the latest tests we had at Fiorano confirmed that the championship is still within reach."

Asked if it was a promise, he said: "I'm used to keeping my promises, so all I can do is underline what you have already seen: that we are all working flat out.

"(Eddie) Irvine has been doing his bit and so has everyone else."

The former double world champion denied that this weekend's Hungarian Grand Prix was his last chance to get back on track.

"Absolutely, not," he said. "There are four more grand prix after that, and until the title has been won arithmetically, it's only right to consider myself in the race for the 1998 title."

He dismissed the British threat, despite the impressive test performances recently turned in by Williams.

"Tests can also give the wrong impression," said the German.

"They are different to grand prix races. I know full well that the Williams are improving, you could see that at Hockenheim.

"But there's no reason to think they are anything for us to worry about. They'll keep getting closer, but not enough to frighten us."

Looking ahead to Sunday's race, he told the Gazzetta dello Sport: "I'm more optimistic than I was about Hockenheim... I think we are going to be very competitive."

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5th Arab Junior Swimming Championships

Jordan wins 1st gold medal

By Roufan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan's Hana Majjaj Wednesday beat all expectations and raised the Jordanian flag up high after taking the gold medal in the 200m butterfly on the third day of the 5th Arab Junior Swimming Championships at Al Hussein Youth City.

Egypt's Olivia Najeeb came second with 2:30.13 followed by teammate Shatha Abu Esmail third with 2:32.58.

The gold medal brought to four the total number of medals Jordan won so far after a silver and two bronze medals won earlier.

The Kingdom's girls team won a silver medal after securing second place in the 4x100 freestyle relay in the Under-14 category while their Under-16 teammates won a bronze in the 4x100 freestyle relay.

Jordan's Sadeq Damrah had captured the first bronze medal after securing third place in the 100m breaststroke on the opening day of the event in which 12 countries are taking part in swimming, water polo and diving competitions.

A smiling Majjaj said that it was a surprise to win first place.

"I am so happy to have come in first and clinched a gold medal," she told the Jordan Times.

"I have been working hard for this moment," she added.

Coach Ali Nawwas expressed pride in his young swimmer.

"I am so proud of what she did and I hope now we will have more support from the federation," Nawwas told the Jordan Times.

STANDINGS (by press time)

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze
Egypt	25	21	11
Algeria	6	6	6
Morocco	3	3	3
Tunisia	1	2	3
Syria	1	1	2
Jordan	1	1	2
Oman	-	-	4
Saudi Arabia	-	-	2
Lebanon	-	1	4

"We hope the federation will take better care of our swimmers and coaches," he added.

Meanwhile, Egypt kept on scoring and added eight more medals by press time.

In overall results, Egypt is leading with 25 gold medals followed by Algeria with six medals and Morocco with three.

In Wednesday's races, Egypt's Yasmeen Abulez came first with 28.09 in the 50m freestyle for the Under-15 category. In the 50m freestyle Under-17 category, Morocco's Elham Hamim clocked 29.00 while Jordan's Tala Khouri came in the sixth place clocking 30.29.

Algeria's Raouf Ben Obaid clocked 57.11 in the 100m freestyle while Jordan's George Khouri came last with 1:06.41.

Egypt's Mohammed Awwad came first in 50m breaststroke with 34.48 while Jordan's Nader Ghiadah came fourth with 39.53.

Jordan's Sadeq Damrah also took fourth place in the 50m Under-15 category clocking 34.43 while Egypt's Ahmed Khouli secured another gold by clocking 32.01.

Egypt's Waleed Radwan clocked 31.34 in the 50m breaststroke in the Under-17 while Jordan's Fares Al Nasser came seventh with 33.55.

Meanwhile, Egypt overcame Saudi Arabia 11-2 in the opening waterpolo match Tuesday at Crown Hotel.

Only three teams are taking part in the waterpolo event: Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

The August 10-16 championships groups swimmers from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt, Algeria, Oman, Iraq, Syria, Qatar, Tunisia, Palestine, Morocco in addition to Jordan.

Held under the Patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Rania, the championship is the first of many in preparation for the upcoming Pan-Arab Games which will be held in Amman 1999.

Tauziat, Testud and Zvereva score wins

MANHATTAN BEACH (AFP) — Wimbledon finalist Nathalie Tauziat, seventh seed Sandrine Testud and eighth seed Natasha Zvereva were straight-set winners Tuesday at a $450,000 WTA event.

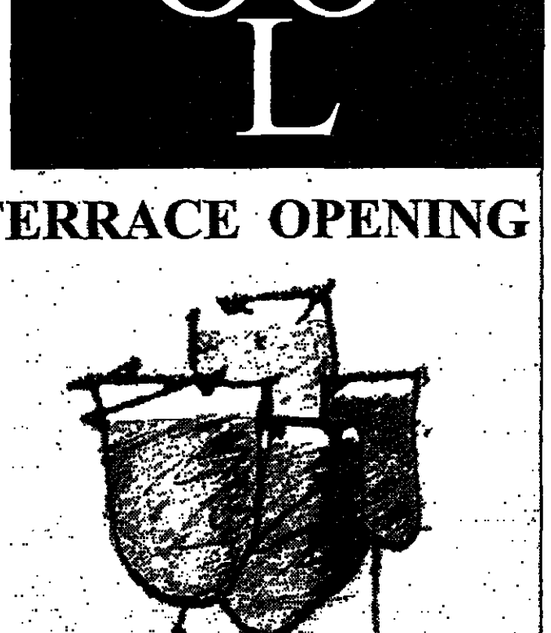
Tauziat, the fifth seed from France, got past American Chanda Rubin, 6-4, 7-5, and compatriot Testud downed Italy's Adriana Serra-Zanetti, 6-3, 7-5.

Zvereva, the eighth seed from Belarus and a surprise Wimbledon semi-finalist, topped Luxembourg's Anne Kremer, 7-5, 6-2.

Croatia's Iva Majoli, the 1997 French Open champion, booked a second-round meeting with top-seeded Martina Hingis by rallying past Italy's Rita Grande, 1-6, 6-2, 6-4.

Hingis will be seeking her first title in three months. After winning 12 tournaments in 1997, Hingis has won just four this year and none since the Italian Open in May, her last appearance in a final.

Preparing to defend her U.S. Open title in three weeks, Hingis made her summer hardcourt debut last week in San Diego but squandered three match points in a three-set semifinal loss to France's Mary Pierce.



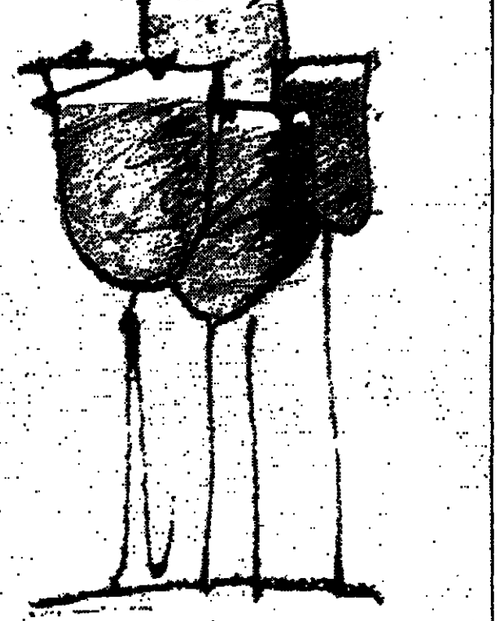
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Expert: U.S. government studies on Gulf war syndrome flawed

DALLAS (AP) — The Defence Department has ordered a review of the U.S. government's research on the existence of Gulf war syndrome, in response to an epidemiologist's report that said three studies on the subject were seriously flawed.

The three studies, published in 1996 and 1997, found that Gulf war veterans did not have higher rates of post-war death, hospitalisation or birth defects among their children than did other veterans of the same period.

But Dr. Robert Haley reported Tuesday in the American Journal of Epidemiology that the researchers erred in their statistical analysis and allowed the studies to bias one another.

"The conclusions they reached are not supported by their data," said Haley, chief of epidemiology at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Centre at Dallas.

Instead, he said he believes that Gulf war veterans have experienced substantial increases in deaths and hospitalisations and that the previous research has not ruled out an increase in birth defects as well.

Haley is part of a research team at UT Southwestern that previously concluded that some Gulf war veterans suffer from distinct symptom clusters caused by chemical poisoning, not post-traumatic stress disorder or other psychological problems.

Last year, he published a study that suggested some veterans may suffer neurological damage from nerve gas or pesticides.

The authors of the original studies defended their work in articles Tuesday alongside Haley's.

"We believe Dr. Haley's assertions are unwarranted and unlikely explanations for our findings," wrote Han K. Kang and Tim Bullman, who researched deaths among Gulf war veterans.

In his critique, Haley said that in one instance, the researchers did not account for the fact that soldiers sent to war would be healthier than those who were not.

He also said government researchers overstated the role that chance played in the differences they found.

In addition, Haley said that during the government's research of birth defects, records from non-military hospitals were not obtained, making the reported number unreliable.

Yemeni cabinet sends 'restrictive' draft law on protests to parliament

SANAA (R) — Yemen's cabinet on Wednesday sent to parliament a draft of the country's first law on demonstrations and public gatherings, which some critics fear could curtail their freedom of protest.

The assembly, which is dominated by President Ali Abdullah Saleh's General People's Congress, is expected to give final approval to the legislation.

Yemen, a fledgling democracy at the southern tip of the Arabian peninsula, in June banned opposition parties from demonstrating after several people died in protests over price rises in foodstuffs, flour and fuel by up to 40 per cent as part of market reforms.

Yemen's opposition had criticised the move to restrict demonstrations, saying it was an attempt to curb democracy.

But a government official said the draft law would help, not hurt, democracy.

"The draft law aims at preserving security and stability in principle, in addition to preserving and enhancing democracy instead of damaging it," a Yemeni official told Reuters.

He said the draft law stipulated that organisers must fill out an application asking for permission to hold a protest or rally. The request must then be approved by the interior ministry or local security authorities.

The application must list the names of the organisers, the reason for the demonstration, its precise venue and schedule.

The official said the draft law "also calls on the opposition parties to inform the authorities of the slogans and banners which will be used in the demonstrations or gatherings."

He said it also called on the opposition and protest organisers to commit themselves to preserving the "security and stability of this country."

The government would be required to provide security for the approved demonstrations, the official said.

After Clinton photo, Iranian parliament bans 'exploitative' images in papers

TEHRAN (AFP) — The Iranian parliament dominated by Islamic conservatives banned on Wednesday "exploitative" images of people in the press, particularly women.

The ruling was a watered down version of a tougher bill introduced by hard-line deputies in April which faced opposition from the government and moderate MPs.

The new law bans "any exploitative and humiliating portraits of men and women" and "any insult against the female sex, advertising a luxurious lifestyle, writing articles which provoke antagonism between the sexes."

Parliament did not specify the penalties, saying offences would be dealt with under the Islamic law of Sharia.

The new measure was prompted by the publication in a magazine early this year of the pictures of three women said to be mistresses of U.S. President Bill Clinton. The magazine was later banned by the culture ministry.

Moderate Culture Minister Ataollah Mohajerani had said the latest measures were "unnecessary."

Iranian conservatives have been sharply critical of the freer atmosphere in the press since President Mohammad Khatami took office a year ago, and called for a crackdown.

Women to be allowed to watch men wrestling

TEHRAN (R) — Iranian women will be permitted to attend a men's wrestling competition for the first time in nearly 20 years, the vice-president of Iran's wrestling federation said on Wednesday.

A special viewing section will be allocated to women during the World Wrestling Championships in Tehran on September 8-11, the daily newspaper Tous quoted Mohammad Reza Taleqani as saying.

"We have designated a special compartment for the ladies because both foreign journalists and the wives of teams' officials or diplomats will watch the competition," Taleqani said.

"For this reason, I see it unlikely that enthusiastic Iranian women fans should be banned from entering the hall," he said.

After the 1979 Islamic Revolution, women have been prohibited from attending men's sports competition.

In a dramatic act of defiance, some 5,000 women forced their way into Tehran's soccer stadium in December, 1997, to welcome the national soccer team back home after qualifying for the World Cup.

Arafat slams Israel for delaying peace process

CAPE TOWN (AP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat said Wednesday that Israeli intransigence was threatening the Middle East peace process and warned of a return of violence and war to the region.

Addressing South Africa's parliament, Arafat told lawmakers Palestinians opted for compromise while the Israeli government reneged on promises of a fair peace deal.

Israel "has challenged international legitimacy and resolutions and opened the door wide to the return of violence, anarchy, war and destruction," said Arafat, who was given a standing ovation when he arrived. "Since the present Israeli government assumed power, it has hindered this (peace) process through procrastination and by evading its commitments."

Arafat demanded U.S. President Bill Clinton try to break deadlock on an American proposal that Israel withdraw troops from an additional 13 per cent of the West Bank in exchange for Palestinian guarantees to combat terror. Arafat has accepted the plan, while Israel has yet to agree.

Arafat, who ends a three-day state visit Wednesday, has been accorded the formal welcome of a full head of state and received the country's highest honour for foreigners — the Order of Good Hope.

Earlier Wednesday, Arafat told journalists he hoped President Nelson Mandela would use his good relationship with Clinton to promote the Palestinian cause in the peace process.

Reporters asked Arafat what he wanted Mandela to tell Clinton. Arafat replied: "To be tough with those who are refusing a peaceful initiative." Arafat also visited Robben Island, site of a former jail just off the coast at Cape Town, where Mandela spent 18 years as a prisoner of the apartheid government.



BEHIND BARS: Palestinian President Yasser Arafat waves through the bars of President Nelson Mandela's former prison cell in Robben Island, off Cape Town, Wednesday (AFP photo)

Guided by Ahmad Kathrada, who was jailed alongside Mandela for fighting white rule, Arafat toured the tiny island prison which has now been converted into a tourist attraction and nature reserve.

Israeli cabinet approves defence budget

TEL AVIV (AP) — Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu's cabinet Wednesday approved an increase in Israel's defence spending for the first time since the 1993 Israeli-Palestinian peace accords were signed.

Netanyahu's aides said an increase was necessary because countries such as Iran and Iraq are becoming increasing threats to Israel's security.

The increase will be reflected in the 1999 budget which the Cabinet debated and later approved Wednesday.

The budget reportedly calls for an increase in the defence budget by $543 million, while still cutting overall spending by $598 million.

Netanyahu had said that the defence spending was necessary in the face of "increasing nearby and distant threats." The cabinet approved the budget by 10-6 vote, with opposition mostly coming from religious parties whose budgets will be tightened. Netanyahu said he was proposing a multi-year programme to increase the defence budget "in light of increasing nearby and distant threats."

"I am happy the government has approved this budget," Netanyahu said afterwards.

Several commentators attributed the request to the deadlock in talks with the Palestinians and rising tensions with the Arab World, but Netanyahu adviser David Bar Illan said the prime minister was referring to the growing danger of confrontation with Iran and possibly Iraq.

Netanyahu said last week that Israel would invest in military responses to Iran's recent test of the Shahab-3 missile, which is capable of reaching Israeli cities.

In light of such developments, Israel needs "to confront the worst-case scenarios," Bar Illan said.

"It doesn't have to do with this government's policy or stance in relation to the peace process" with the Palestinians, he said.

Bar Illan said Israel would

(Continued on page 7)



KISSING LOYALTY ON THE MOUTH: U.S. President Bill Clinton is greeted by his dog Buddy as he arrives at the White House on Wednesday. Clinton returned early from a crosscountry fund-raising trip in order to meet with his foreign policy team to discuss the bombings of two U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania (AFP photo)

Mubarak meets Sudanese opposition leaders in Cairo

CAIRO (R) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak met on Wednesday leaders of the Sudanese opposition who are gathering in Cairo for the first time.

The meeting was attended by John Garang, leader of Sudan's People's Liberation Army (SPLA), National Democratic Alliance leader Mohammed Al Mirghani and former Sudanese Prime Minister Sadeq Al Mahdi.

Presidential palace sources said Mubarak urged the leaders to seek ways to end fighting in Sudan and said Egypt would support such an effort.

This is the first time Egypt has allowed various Sudanese factions to meet in Cairo, a move warmly welcomed by the Sudanese opposition who said it marked a favourable change in Egypt's policy towards them.

Egypt has said it wants to see the unity of Sudanese territory intact and the civil war over.

Relations between Egypt and the Islamist Sudanese government have been strained since Egyptian Muslim militants attempted to kill President Mubarak in Addis Ababa in 1995.

Cairo accuses the Khartoum government of sheltering the attackers, a charge the Sudanese have denied.

Sudan's National Islamic Front government, which came to power in a military coup in 1989, has criticised Egypt for allowing the opposition in exile to operate from Cairo.

Southern rebel leader Garang, who last visited Cairo in December, is scheduled to hold talks with Foreign Minister Amr Musa during his visit.

Egypt rights group deplores lack of medical care for women prisoners

CAIRO (AFP) — Women prisoners in Egypt suffer from torture and a deplorable lack of medical care, an Egyptian human rights group promoting better treatment for prisoners charged Wednesday.

In a report sent to AFP, the Human Rights Centre for Aid to Prisoners said that there is only one full-time doctor serving the prison of Al Qanatir Al Khayria, Egypt's sole women-only prison, 25 kilometres north of Cairo.

"There is only one full-time doctor in this prison which counts 2,000 women, including 48 who are pregnant and 25 mothers who keep their under two-year-old babies with them," said the report.

The report was based on a survey of conditions in the prison in June and July.

It said medicine is rarely available and "in most cases sick prisoners are transferred too late to the hospital."

The report said one baby died after being transferred to hospital following 20 days with diarrhoea in the prison.

Women prisoners suffer malnutrition and make do with one meal per day of rice and spoiled beans, with meat given just once a week, the report said.

The rights group also said the prison has too few beds for inmates serving sentences of less than two years, forcing some to sleep in toilets where sanitation is poor due to lack of water.

The report cited five cases of torture of women prisoners, including one which led to a miscarriage and one which forced a woman to withdraw a complaint under threat of rape.

The human rights group has called for "a review" of Egypt's penal system and for authorities to guarantee better medical care to prisoners.

Israeli court orders ministry to hire women for top positions

TEL AVIV (AFP) — In a landmark decision, Israel's high court has ordered the ultra-Orthodox minister of labour to hire more women for high-ranking positions in the state social security agency.

In its ruling handed down Tuesday and published Wednesday, the supreme court ordered Labour Minister Eli Yishai to find a suitable woman to fill a position of deputy director-general of the National Insurance Institute (NII) which became vacant late last year.

The three-justice panel chided Yishai, a member of the ultra-Orthodox Shas Party, for not even trying to find a female candidate when he appointed a man to the job four months ago.

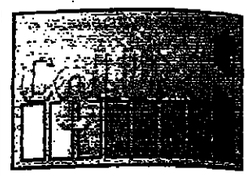
The NII, which oversees the state health insurance and pension systems, has eight deputy director-generals, only one of whom is currently a woman. In its ruling, the court said this ratio showed insufficient representation of women in a state agency that deals with the public and noted that "discrimination against women is an evil that has accompanied our society from early ages" and must be stopped.

The court decision was in response to a petition by the Israel Women's Network, which hailed the ruling as a landmark which would have wide repercussions on public sector appointment policies in Israel.

"This judgement is an important precedent," said Rachel Benziman, an attorney for the women's group.

"It is a breakthrough and a serious stride towards fair treatment of women in Israel's public sector," she told reporters.

The court ruling means that a man hired by Yishai to fill the vacant post as deputy director-general in charge of administration, information technology and information systems must leave the job at the end of his six-month trial period.



No longer monk after caught singing

PHNOM PENH (R) — A Cambodian monk was expelled after he was caught sneaking out of his temple at night to indulge his secret passion — karaoke singing. By day Kung Bunchhoeun, 22, wore the simple orange robes of a monk but at night he would don ordinary garb and slip out of his Phnom Penh temple to croon in nearby karaoke bars, the Koh Santipheap newspaper reported.

Toilets on wheels for speedy relief

BEIJING (R) — Frustrated Chinese desperate to answer nature's call in unfamiliar cities devoid of public toilets may now find relief just around the corner — and on three wheels. Taiyuan, capital of the northern province of Shanxi, has deployed roving privies mounted on tricycles to service crowded sites such as railway stations and public squares, the Xinhua news agency said.

Hoffman discovers star of new film on Italian island

ROME (AFP) — A casual stroll became the meeting of a lifetime for a young woman who was spotted by film star Dustin Hoffman and instantly cast as lead in his new film. Hoffman was enjoying a cocktail on the terrace at a fashionable meeting place on the Italian island of Stromboli, when he spotted Anna. Hoffman talked to Anna about his directorial debut, based on the Hemingway novel "Across the River and into the Trees." Anna said: "It happened just like that, he told me the plot of the film, described the part of Renata and gave me the details of his office in New York, suggesting I send my address and photos."

Profit from propaganda

BUCHAREST (AFP) — An enterprising Romanian is asking $1,000 for a huge propaganda placard depicting ex-dictator Nicolae Ceausescu which he found discarded in a Bucharest warehouse. Constantin Paunescu, a 42-year-old artist, said he originally planned to use the three-metre by two-metre canvas as part of a work of his own. But he changed his mind when the Romanian government announced it is to sell off the personal effects of the dictator and his family later this year. The auction is expected to raise several million dollars.

A Russian debut for the Rolling Stones

MOSCOW (R) — *The Rolling Stones finally made their Russian debut "Privyet Rossiya! Nakonyets, my zdyes! (Hi Russia, we're here at last!),"* front man Mick Jagger bellowed *in Russian to an adoring* crowd of 60,000, most of them young enough to be his children. The Soviet Union barred the band in 1967, the year several of the Stones faced drug charges at home in Britain and released the provocative "Let's Spend the Night Together."

Hopkins pledges a million for Welsh mountain

LONDON (AP) —Welsh actor Sir Anthony Hopkins, more famous as Hannibal "The Cannibal" lecter than as a nature lover, has pledged a million pounds to help save 4,000 acres of Mount Snowdon, Wales' highest mountain. "Snowdonia is one of the most beautiful places in the world and Snowdon is the jewel that lies at its heart," Hopkins said Wednesday. "It must be cherished and protected."